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PROTESTANTISM  
AND THE  
BIBLE

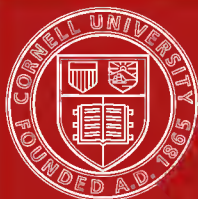
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PROTESTANTISM AND THE BIBLE.

LECTURES

DELIVERED IN ST. ANN'S CHURCH

ON THE

SUNDAY EVENINGS OF ADVENT 1880.

BY THE

VERY REV. THOMAS S. PRESTON, V.G., LL.D.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following lectures present, in a brief and popular form, the argument against Protestantism, drawn from its use of the Holy Scriptures. They are a continuation of former discourses upon the nature and results of the Protestant Reformation. Wherever you approach error you find contradictions and inconsistency. The houses of heretics and schismatics are divided against themselves, and built upon either absolute falsehood or the perversion of truth. The children of Protestant parents are fast going away from every species of dogmatism; and the different sects are losing not only unity of faith, but also the conviction of the necessity of a creed. Liberalism, or freedom of thought in matters of revelation, is the characteristic of our times. No article of faith is made the condition of church-membership, or even of the exercise of the ministry. Creeds must grow with the progress of science, and men must be left

free to embrace new views, as day unto day brings more light, and widens the circle of knowledge.

Yet there are among the many to whom the Catholic truth is unknown those who can never relinquish the associations of childhood, nor all the truths of Christianity. They cling to their Bibles, which they have received as the oracles of God and the words of Christ to a fallen world. They identify their interpretations of the inspired Scriptures with all that they have of religion, and with all their hopes of a future life. We would not for one moment judge their consciences. But, for the reason that we believe in their sincerity, we would press upon them the discharge of a duty from which they cannot be excused. They are bound to examine well the grounds of their faith. They cannot take the Bible as their only teacher, without knowing the authority which has received it from the Holy Ghost and delivered it to men. They cannot credit the falsehoods which gave birth to the Reformation, and which are still repeated to the ignorant, as well as to those who are wilfully deceived. They cannot close their eyes to the facts which all around us testify to the logical consequences of the principle of private judgment. The

Bible must be authenticated by some living, infallible witness, or else it cannot stand. If it be accepted as the work of the Divine Spirit upon the testimony of the Catholic Church, then in all things must that testimony be obeyed. The Scriptures and the Church cannot be separated, neither in logic nor in fact. The attempt to separate them violates the order of God, and leads to countless contradictions; while it results in the abuse of the sacred word to the destruction of faith and piety. It is strange that the lessons of the past three hundred years are lost upon so many; that any should fail to see the truth which is so plain, which responds to the needs of the intellect and heart. One reason why men do not accept the teachings of Catholic faith, is that they are unwilling to submit their intelligence to an authority external to themselves. If they would reason for one moment, they would see that such an authority is essential to the exercise of faith, and that the Protestant principle destroys, root and branch, the fundamental idea of Christianity, which is a fixed creed coming from God through Christ.

These lectures are only a mere outline of the subject so much more ably treated in larger and more

profound works. We venture to hope that they may fall into some hands where, by the divine blessing, they may bring forth fruit. They are presented to the public with the utmost charity to all, and the earnest desire to promote the glory of God in the salvation of souls. If honest Protestants could be brought to see the harmony, sufficiency, and divinity of the Catholic faith, they would gladly leave all their prejudices and worldly ties behind them, and follow Christ, who in His Church is the way, the truth, and the life.

T. S. P.

NEW YORK, November 21, 1880.

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# LECTURE FIRST.

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## *THE PRETENSIONS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS IN REGARD TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.*

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“I have not written to you as to them who know not the truth, but as to them who know it ; and that no lie is of the truth.”—1 E. ST. JOHN ii. 21.

ON a former occasion we have considered at some length the religious revolution commonly called the Protestant Reformation, with its results upon faith, morals, and society. The subject is of the highest importance, and demands the careful examination of every sincere mind. It is terrible in matters of religion to be the victim of falsehood. We were able to show conclusively that the Reformers were in many cases depraved by their own teachings, and that infidelity and immorality were the legitimate fruits of their rebellion against the received Christianity. It is an evil tree which brings forth evil fruit ; it is an unholy system which is founded upon untruth, and which depends for its dissemination upon dishonesty.

This argument alone is sufficient to convince the true mind, since it is founded on the first simple principles of logic.

The subject which we propose for your consideration during this Advent is connected with the conclusions of our former lectures. Still, it is of sufficient importance to demand a particular attention. The Holy Scriptures were taken by the early Reformers as the pretext for their departure from the received Christian creed, and the foundation of their erroneous doctrines. They even charged upon the Catholic Church the neglect and contradiction of the Scriptures, and professed in the light of the inspired word to restore Christianity to its primitive purity. Their descendants have ever since claimed the Bible as their peculiar property, and rely upon it for their doctrines; while by it they seek to justify their practices. They would represent that their creed is the only Scriptural one, and that the faith of the Catholic Church has come from the corruption of the inspired writings, and wilful disobedience to their teachings.

It will be the purpose of these lectures to enter upon this subject briefly, but at the same time satisfactorily; and we shall endeavor to show where the truth lies. We shall proceed to expose the facts of the controversy, to manifest what Protestantism has done with the Bible, and to demonstrate the logical



ground upon which its Scriptural pretensions stand. The simple plan of our argument will be to set forth, first, the false pretensions of the Protestant Reformers in regard to the Bible ; secondly, the doctrine of the principal Protestant churches, with its logical fruits and conclusions ; thirdly, the actual history of the Bible among the Reformers and their children ; and, lastly, the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church.

As in former lectures, we shall advance the testimony of leading Protestants, and facts admitted by their own writers. Although these discourses are popular, and make no pretension to the dignity of a theological treatise, yet, as they contain the outline of an unanswerable argument, we humbly hope they may produce an effect upon some minds which are tired of mere assertions and logical contradictions. To this end we earnestly implore the assistance and blessing of the Divine Spirit, without whose inspiration nothing can avail in word or work. He can make use of the meanest instrument, and write living and life-giving characters upon the willing heart.

This evening's lecture divides itself naturally into two parts, in which we shall first consider the pretensions of the Protestant Reformers in regard to the Bible, and, secondly, show their dishonesty and untruth.

## I.

The pretensions of the Reformers may be reduced to these three: first, that the Holy Scriptures were generally unknown to the people, and even to the priesthood; secondly, that the Catholic Church had suppressed them and prevented their use; and, thirdly, that on the ignorance of the written word of God was built the Papal authority with its whole system of faith.

Let us consider these pretensions, one by one, as they were made the pretext of religious and civil revolution.

1. It is a standing assertion, disproved many times, but still as often reasserted, that the discovery of the Bible led to the Reformation. Martin Luther, the leader among his fellows, was the happy man who made this discovery. He was a student of the University of Erfurt, where he had been two years, when "one day," says D'Aubigné, "he was opening the books in the library, in order to know the names of the authors. Books were then rare, and it was to him a great privilege to profit by the treasures united in this vast collection. One volume which he opened in its turn struck his attention. Up to that moment he had never seen anything like it. He read the title. It was a Bible—a rare book, and unknown at that

time. His interest was vividly excited. He is filled with astonishment at finding more in this volume than those fragments of the Gospels and Epistles which the Church had selected to be read to the people on the Sundays of the year. Till then he had thought that they were the whole word of God ; and behold ! here are so many pages, chapters, and books of which he had no idea.” \* “The Bible that had filled him with such transport was in Latin. He read and re-read, and then, in his surprise and joy, went back to read again. The first gleams of a new truth arose in his mind. Thus has God caused him to find His holy word ! For the first time, perhaps, this precious volume has been removed from the place that it occupied in the library of Erfurt. This book, deposited on the unknown shelves of a dark room, is soon to become the book of life for a whole nation. The Reformation lay hid in that Bible.” † The English historian Milner repeats the same story, and in nearly the same words : “In the second year after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin Bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. Then he first discovered that there were more Scripture passages extant than those which were read to the people ; for the Scrip-

\* D'Aubigné, Vol. I. p. 197.

† *Ibid.*, p. 198.

tures were at that time very little known in the world.” \*

The Rev. Dr. Maitland, a Protestant clergyman, thus writes: “I believe that the idea which many persons have of ecclesiastical history may be briefly stated thus: that the Christian Church was a small, scattered, and persecuted flock until the time of Constantine; that then, at once, and as if by magic, the Roman world became Christian; that this universal Christianity, not being of a very pure, solid, or durable nature, melted down into a filthy mass called Popery, which held its place during the dark ages, until the revival of pagan literature and the consequent march of intellect sharpened men’s wits and brought about the Reformation, when it was discovered that the Pope was Antichrist, and that the saints had been in the hands of the little horn predicted by the prophet Daniel, for hundreds of years, without knowing so awful a fact or suspecting anything of the kind.” †

In connection with this common view of the middle ages among Protestants is the almost universal opinion that the Bible was nearly unknown, and that, discovered by their religious progenitors, it is in a special sense their property. They brought it

\* Milner, Vol. IV. p. 324.

† Maitland, “Dark Ages,” p. 188.

into light, and made it the rule of faith and practice. But for the labors of the Reformers it would have long slumbered in obscurity. So says Martin Luther in his "Table-Talk": "Thirty years ago the Bible was an unknown book; the Prophets were not understood: it was thought they could not be translated."

2. The inference from these assertions is that the Catholic Church, so long the custodian of the Scriptures, had suppressed them and prevented their use. The principal versions of the Bible were in the Latin tongue, and the conclusion is drawn that the people were not allowed to have recourse to them, and that even the priesthood were restricted in their use. The Church was afraid of the Bible and unwilling to expose its dogmas to its light. Moreover, the Papal authority had by special edict prohibited the common reading of the inspired word. Such were the constant accusations of the Reformers, while they professed, in opposition to Catholic tradition which they despised, to rely upon the Holy Scriptures alone as interpreted by every individual man. They even claimed that the sacred text was free from any obscurity and intelligible to every reader. "Should any one," says Luther, "attack you, saying that the Bible is obscure, or that it should be read with the aid of the commentaries of the Fathers, you will reply: This is not true, for there never existed on earth a book more

easily intelligible than the Bible.” Tyndale, one of the most prominent of the English Reformers, declares “that the abbots took the Scriptures from their monks, lest some should bark against them; and set up such long service and singing withal, that they should have no time to read in the Bible but with their lips.” The following language from a popular Protestant sermon is quoted by Maitland in his “Dark Ages”: “Sunk in the lowest state of earthly depression, pressed by every art and engine of human hostility, by the blind hatred of the half-barbarian kings of feudal Europe, by the fanatical furies of their ignorant people, and, above all, by the great spiritual domination, containing in itself a mass of solid and despotic strength unequalled in the annals of power, vivified and envenomed by a reckless antipathy unknown in the annals of the passions, what had the Scriptures to do but perish?”\* There is no need to dwell upon this point, inasmuch as the Bible was confessedly in the hands of the Church, and the responsibility of the alleged suppression of the same must be laid at her door. It is even asserted that the Papal authority had prohibited the general reading of the Scriptures, by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, and that this was the natural expression

\* Maitland, p. 208.

of the hostility of the Holy See to the study and knowledge of the inspired word. Such allegations have been made in the ears of all Protestants since their childhood, and have been almost universally received.

3. On this ignorance of the sacred writings, which was so carefully provided for, the whole fabric of priestly domination was built. Fearful to meet the light of the inspired text, the Pope of Rome hid the Bible in the cells of monasteries, or chained it to the desks of the churches, where there could be no danger of the dissemination of its life-giving truths. The alleged suppression of the Scriptures could have naturally no other motive. Rome trembled for her dominion, and, when the unlucky discovery was made by Luther, hastened up all her forces and fought for her life, seeing that her hour was come. With the free and unrestricted reading of the word of God came the hour of liberty from the despotism of priests; and Antichrist, so vividly portrayed in the Apocalypse, was forced to flee before the unsheathed sword of the Spirit. Nations fell away from the Catholic Church. Priests and religious embraced the new gospel, and the bright light which beamed from the sacred text shone upon a restored Christianity in its primitive purity.

## II.

We are now to examine in detail these assertions and pretensions which not even the disasters of three centuries have dissipated. Let us see what the real truth is. There is neither time nor space here for a full demonstration, but a few words of unquestioned history will suffice.

1. Before the date of the Reformation the Holy Scriptures were not generally unknown to priests and people, but, considering the circumstances of the times, were well known and carefully studied.

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, in the year 1483. He made his profession at the Augustinian Convent at Erfurt in 1507, and was ordained priest. Let us look at the facts in regard to the Scriptures before the date on which he is said to have made his great discovery of the unknown word of God. The invention of printing took place in A.D. 1438. Before that time the sacred books were all preserved in writing. First they were copied on skins duly prepared. Then they were transcribed on parchment, which was first in the shape of rolls, and afterwards in the more convenient form of a book. There were three celebrated and principal manuscripts: the Alexandrine, the Latin, and the Byzantine. The arrangement of the Bible in chapters was made by Cardinal



Hugo in the thirteenth century. The celebrated Septuagint version of the Old Testament was begun in the year 285 before Christ. The Latin Vulgate version, which is approved by the Church, dates from the year 405.

Now, before the date of printing, the cost of copying the canon of Scripture on parchment was no inconsiderable sum. It is estimated that the thirty-five thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven verses which it contains would make twelve thousand seven hundred and eighty-three folios. This would fill four hundred and twenty-seven skins of parchment on both sides. The parchment alone would cost about four hundred dollars, while the copying would result in an expense of six hundred dollars, making the complete Bible cost at least one thousand dollars. This great expense would prevent the universal dissemination of the Scriptures as at the present day. In spite, however, of all this expense, the sacred word was carefully copied and in constant use. Perhaps we may say it was more revered and better understood than even at this day. Merryweather observes: "The Bible, it is true, was an expensive book, but it can scarcely be regarded as a rare one; the monastery was indeed poor that had it not, and, when once obtained, the monks took care to speedily transcribe it. Sometimes they possessed only

detached portions, but when this was the case, they generally borrowed of some neighboring and more fortunate monastery the missing parts to transcribe, and so complete their own copies." \*

Kings and nobles offered the Bible as an appropriate and generous gift, and bishops were deemed benefactors to their Church by adding it to the library. We need only refer to the works of Griesbach, Bentley, Michaelis, Mill, Simon, Kennicott, Wetstein, Blanchini, and Scholz, on the numerous manuscripts of the Sacred Scripture.

The collections of the Bible in the Vatican, Ambrosian, and Magliabecchian libraries in Italy, and those which France possesses in the Mazarin, St. Geneviève, and Royal libraries of Paris, bear witness to the wonderful zeal and toil displayed in copying, circulating, and interpreting the sacred word. To these collections, so celebrated, are to be added those of Venice, Vienna, Stuttgart, Göttingen, as well as the Bodleian and British Museum. Nor were these copies of the Scriptures wholly in the Latin Vulgate. "In 807 Charlemagne caused the whole Bible to be translated into French; in 820 Otfrid, a Benedictine monk, composed in the same language a harmony of the Four Gospels; in the same century a version of

\* Merryweather's "Bibliomania in the Middle Ages," p. 24.

the Psalms in French was made by the order of Louis le Débonnaire ; in the twelfth century translations of the Four Gospels, the Epistles of St. Paul, the Psalms, the Book of Job, and some other portions of the Bible were made in the diocese of Metz ; in the fourteenth century Jean de Vignay translated the Epistles and Gospels in the Missal at the request of the Queen of France. By command of Charles V. a French version of a portion of the Bible was made, a copy of which is preserved among the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum.

“In the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris are several old French versions; of the twelfth century three copies of the Psalms, and of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries nearly sixty different versions, comprising translations of the entire Bible and of different books. Among the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum we find a copy of the Gospels in French verse, and a harmony of the Gospels which belonged to Canute; and among the Harleian MSS. in the same collection are two copies of a French translation of a portion of the Bible, from Genesis to the end of the Psalms, and five French versions of the Psalms, two of which are accompanied by English translations.

“Versions in Anglo-Saxon were made by various hands. King Alfred is said to have translated the whole Bible. Aldhelm translated the Psalms ; Ælfric

rendered the first seven books of the Old Testament and part of Job; and Beda translated the whole Bible, having completed his task but a few moments before he expired.”\* Buckingham, in his account of the Bible in the middle ages, gives notice of the translation of the Scriptures into sixteen modern languages, all made between the fourth and the fifteenth century, and these must have been made for the use of the laity, since the Scriptures were invariably read by the clergy in the Latin tongue, then the universal language of learned Christendom.

After the invention of printing in 1438 the editions of the inspired writings became very numerous. Hallam proves that the Bible was the first book printed, and it was soon published in nearly every language.† The learned Protestant bibliographer, Dibdin, says: “From the year 1462 to the end of the fifteenth century the editions of the Latin Bible may be considered literally innumerable, and, generally speaking, only repetitions of the same text.”‡ He enumerates the following editions: at Mentz in 1455; at Bamberg, 1461; at Rome, 1471; Venice, 1476; Naples, 1476; in Bohemia, 1488; in Poland, 1563; in Iceland, 1551; in Russia, 1581; in France, 1475; in Holland, 1477;

\* Buckingham, “Bible in the Middle Ages,” pp. 40–44.

† “History of Literature,” I. 96.

‡ Dibdin’s “Library Companion,” p. 15.

in England, 1535 ; in Spain, 1477. Celebrated editions appeared at Bologna in 1482 ; at Soncino in 1488 ; at Brescia in 1494 ; and at Bamberg in 1518. The edition of Brescia is the one which Luther is said to have used. Cardinal Ximenes undertook the expensive and unprecedented task of printing a polyglot. This work was begun in 1504 and terminated in 1517. This polyglot contains an independent Hebrew text, which became the basis of several other editions, as also the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and a Chaldee paraphrase. The New Testament contains the Greek text and the Latin Vulgate. This great work was dedicated to Pope Leo X. and is in six folio volumes. The Antwerp Polyglot appeared in 1569, in eight volumes folio, at the expense of Philip II. of Spain. The Parisian Polyglot, in seven languages, appeared in 1645.

As to the translations into the modern languages to which we have already referred, it may be well to resume here that, after the invention of printing, nearly every country in Europe soon possessed an edition in its vernacular.

In Germany the first printed Bible extant is that of Nuremberg, in 1447, and a second appeared in 1466. The edition of 1466 was so frequently and rapidly reprinted that, prior to the publication of Luther's Bible, it had been issued no fewer than sixteen times,

once at Strasburg, five times at Nuremberg, and ten times at Augsburg. Three distinct editions also appeared at Wittenberg in 1470, 1483, and 1490, so that before Luther was heard of, or even born, the Bible must have been well known and well read.

In France the “Bible Historiale” of Des Moulins was published about 1478, and was reprinted sixteen times prior to 1546. Lefèvre published an edition of the Scriptures in 1512. According to Simon, edition after edition appeared, among which are the well-known translations of De Sacy, Corbin, Amelotte, Maralles, Godeau, and Huré.

In the Flemish language the first printed Bible is that published at Cologne in 1475. It was reprinted at least seven times before 1530.

In Spain the translation ascribed to St. Vincent Ferrer was printed at Valencia in 1478 with the formal permission of the Inquisition, and reprinted in 1515, and of it numerous editions were published at Antwerp, Barcelona, and Madrid.

In Italy, in 1290, Jacobus à Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, published the entire Bible in Italian. Another translation, prepared by the Camaldolese monk Nicholas Malermi, was printed at Venice in 1471, and again in Rome in the same year. It was so eagerly purchased that before the year 1525 no fewer than thirteen editions of it had issued from the press.

They were all published with the permission of the Inquisition, as were also eight other editions which were printed before 1567.

In England the translations of the Protestants, Tyn-dale and Coverdale, bear the date of 1535. The edition called the "Bishops' Bible" appeared in 1568. In 1582 the New Testament was published at Rheims, and the Old Testament was completed at Douay in 1609. This is the authorized English translation among the Catholics of England and the United States. Since that date the editions of this Bible, with various corrections and emendations, have been very numerous.\*

The version of King James, published 1611, is the one generally used among Protestants.

We have, then, conclusively proved that the Bible was generally known and circulated before the time of Luther, not only in the original and Latin text, but also in the vernacular of the principal countries of Europe. Any one must have been lamentably ignorant who did not know the Scriptures and their principal lessons. These lessons were taught to the people constantly, and impressed with authority upon their hearts. As for Martin Luther, he was instructed by intelligent and pious parents, and is said to have made

\* Waterworth, "English Reformation," chap. x.

great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg and Eisenach, and at the University of Erfurt. There he applied himself to learn the philosophy of the middle ages in the writings of Occam, Scotus, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure. "These writings," to use the words of Dr. Maitland, "are *made of the Scriptures*. These writers not only constantly quoted the Scriptures, and appealed to them as authorities on all occasions, but they thought and spoke the thoughts, words, and phrases of the Bible as the natural mode of expressing themselves."\* One can hardly understand these great writers without a certain familiarity with the sacred text. Moreover, Luther had made his vows as an Augustinian monk, and was ordained priest. The preparation for the sacred office of priesthood, not to speak of his obligations as a religious, required patient and laborious study of the inspired word. In addition to this, the breviary, which he was bound to recite, consists almost entirely of the Psalms of David and other quotations from the sacred books. Ignorance, therefore, of the Scriptures in his case was impossible, and is only a false pretence, too baseless to be accepted or repeated by any intelligent mind. The most wonderful expositions of the word of God were written before the Reformation, and we must admit that in deep and devout study the middle ages

\* Maitland, p. 470.



have exceeded our own. Luther, by position and education, had especial advantages which are not the portion of every one, even in our own age.

Even Zwinglius, who made many false boasts for himself, says to Luther: "You are unjust in putting forth the boastful claim of dragging the Bible from beneath the dusty benches of the schools. You forget that we have gained a knowledge of the Scriptures through the translations of others. You are very well aware, with all your blustering, that previously to your time there existed a host of scholars who, in Biblical knowledge and philological attainments, were incomparably your superiors."\*

2. In face of these facts it seems hardly necessary to reply to the accusation that the Catholic Church had suppressed the Bible and prevented its general use. To the care and zeal of the Church, as we have seen, the Sacred Scriptures owe their preservation in the midst of all dangers, wars, conflagrations, and torrents of barbarian and Moslem fury. We have briefly given testimony of the patient labor and anxious solicitude with which her priesthood and religious devoted themselves to the copying of the inspired writings, and the study and exposition of their meaning. In her seminaries the candidates for the

\* Alzog, III. 49.

sacerdotal office were diligently trained in the knowledge of the divine word, and her monasteries were the homes of sacred learning. Careful selections from the Bible were read to the people on every Sunday and festival during the year.

There is no possible denial of these facts, and therefore the advocates of the Reformation resort to two assertions which are plain evasions of the truth.

They say that the Bible was preserved in the Latin tongue only, and that the Church, by decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, had prohibited its general use. Inconsistent as these accusations are with the whole policy of the Apostolic See, they yet deserve here a brief notice.

We have already seen how carefully, by the solicitude of the Church, the original manuscripts were preserved and copied. These manuscripts were of course in the language in which they were written. The preservation of this text was in the highest degree necessary. The translation into the Latin tongue was made while that language was a living one, and well known among all the educated classes. Even to the reign of Charlemagne, in the beginning of the ninth century, the Latin language was that which was most generally understood and spoken in Europe. Down to the sixteenth century, and even afterwards, it was the only language of literature, of theology, of medi-

cine, and of legislation. The common people of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France could understand it without difficulty. Most of the modern languages of Europe were formed from it, and in Hungary it had been spoken by the people for many centuries. It was taught in every school in Christendom, and was the medium through which other branches of learning were made known. Under these circumstances the publication of the Bible in the Latin tongue was the very best way to make it generally known and uniformly understood. No language so universal as the Latin then existed, either among scholars or among those who possessed the rudiments of education.

But we have already seen that long before Luther's time the Scriptures were translated into the living tongues of Europe. Almost every nation possessed a version in its own vernacular. "Before the publication of Luther's translation there had appeared in Germany no less than three distinct versions of the whole Bible, the last of which had passed through at least seventeen different editions. Add to these the three editions of Wittenberg, and we find that the Bible had already been reprinted in the German language no less than twenty times before the version of Luther appeared."\* Comment on these facts seems

\* Abp. Spalding, "Ref.," Vol. I. p. 296.

superfluons. There were at least seventy editions of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongues before Luther had circulated one copy of his German Bible. Yet he says in his "Table-Talk": "Thirty years ago the Bible was an unknown book; the Prophets were not understood; it was thought that they could not be translated. I was twenty years old before I saw the Scriptures."

But notwithstanding these facts, "the Church, after all this labor to preserve and make known the inspired word, had by decree prohibited its use"! This would be a singular contradiction, and, if it could be true, would convict the Church of the most stupid folly. Why did the ecclesiastical authorities permit and encourage the publication of a book not allowed to general use? What became of all the editions in the vernacular of different nations? They were not for the use of priests exclusively, who were accustomed to the study of the Latin Vulgate. For whom, then, were these different translations, unless for the people, who must have paid for their publication? And where is this decree prohibiting the reading of the Bible? Let us look at the facts of the case. There is nothing to be gained by misrepresentation or falsehood. First, it was the care of the ecclesiastical authorities to guard against the circulation of erroneous or inaccurate editions. It will be admitted by

every one that any corruption or mistranslation would be a very serious matter. The change of a word even might alter the whole sense of a phrase. The publication of an incorrect translation would not be the publication of the word of God. The Church was therefore bound, as far as was in her power, to provide against this great evil. Secondly, as far as any decree prohibiting the general reading of the Bible is concerned, there is nothing in all history that bears any semblance of the same before the close of the Council of Trent in 1563. Then a rule of discipline was established which “permits the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongues by Catholic authors to those only whom the bishop, with the advice of the parish priests or confessors, shall judge that such reading will prove profitable unto an increase of faith and piety.” The reason assigned for this rule was “that experience had made it manifest that the permission to read the Bible indiscriminately in the vulgar tongues had, from the rashness of men, produced more harm than good.” This regulation of discipline was temporary, and designed to meet the evils existing during the confusion of the times. It was a rule “which was not everywhere received in practice, and which has long since ceased to be of binding force on any part of the Catholic Church. The present discipline requires only that the version

be approved, and illustrated by commentaries from the Fathers and other Catholic writers. Pope Pius VI., in a letter written April 1, 1778, to Anthony Martini, the translator of the Italian version, praises him for his undertaking, and adds these words, "The Scriptures are the most abundant sources, which ought to be left open to every one to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine." \* At the time of the Reformation, people inflamed with the infection of the times, seemed to be seized with a religious madness, and simple persons were in constant danger from fanatical teachers who, in their enthusiasm, perverted the sacred text to the destruction of all faith and piety. Preachers and apostate monks appeared in the public places, exciting revolution and leading away the unwary. As an illustration of what so often disgraced the whole Protestant movement, "Carlstadt, at Wittenberg, went about at the head of a mob demolishing altars, overturning statues, and destroying pictures and sacred images, and, to put the crown on all his sacrilegious conduct, administered the Lord's Supper to all who chose to approach. Prophets arose on every side, and the Anabaptists made their followers wild with frenzy and illusion. Carlstadt carried his zeal against human science so far that he cast

\* Archbishop Spalding, I. 305. Archbishop Kenrick, "Theol. Dog.," I. 429.

into the flames the text-books brought him by students from all quarters, saying that henceforth the Bible alone should be read among men. Under pretext of this principle, that the Bible alone was sufficient, he went through the streets of Wittenberg with the Scriptures in his hand, stopping the passers-by, and entering the shops of the mechanics, to ask the meaning of difficult passages, as from persons whose minds had not been warped by the sophistry of science. The students passed beyond the control of the authorities, and it was feared the university would be closed. Even the heresiarchs were startled at the excesses to which their teachings had led, and began to grow uneasy, lest they might serve as a pretext to the Duke of Saxony for putting a stop to any further attempts at reforming the Church.”\* The Protestants themselves were forced in self-defence to admit the evils which sprang from their doctrine, and attribute to the false interpretation of the Bible the controversies and fanaticism which threatened the foundations of society. “We thought,” says a learned Protestant, “that we were gaining a victory over the Roman Church by the free circulation of the Bible. But the Church herself has conquered by its careful prohibition of the common reading of the ver-

\* Alzog, III. 54.

nacular translations. For it is manifest that her prohibition is not absolute but relative. Relative prohibitions of this kind are nothing but a prudent circumspection against unfaithful versions, and that arbitrary interpretation which opens the way to errors of every kind; against the practice of exposing the inspired word without direction to the inexperience of youth and the intemperance of a corrupt imagination by which the sacred books, whose nature demands maturity of mind and purity of heart, are productive of great evil.”\*

When these facts are taken into consideration, the action of the Catholic Church is fully explained, and has been even approved by candid Protestants. “It is,” says Archbishop Spalding, “plainly a slander to assert that she forbids the reading of the Scriptures.” Translations and expositions have been published in every country, and are easy of access to all who seek them. “In the United States Catholics have published at least as many editions of the Bible as any Protestant sect. These have appeared in every form, and may be had in every Catholic bookstore in the country, and are in the possession of most Catholic families.”†

3. It seems now almost superfluous to reply at any

\* Abauzit ap. Perrone, II. 1193.

† Archbishop Spalding, I. 306.



length to the third pretence of the Reformers, that the whole system of the Catholic faith was built upon the ignorance of the Scriptures.

The argument of these lectures will show how plainly the inspired word supports the creed of the Church, and how the only existing infallible witness of truth maintains the inspiration of the sacred text. The Holy See would have had no motive to keep in darkness the Bible, which, according to its judgment, sustains by divine authority all its claims. And this interpretation, in accordance with Catholic tradition, is the uniform voice of all Christian antiquity. "Learn also diligently," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 345, "and from the Church, which are the books of the Old Testament and which of the New, and read not to me anything of the uncertain books. Those only meditate on earnestly which we read confidently even in the Church. Far wiser than thou, and more devout, were the apostles and ancient bishops, the rulers of the Church, who have handed them down. Take thou and hold, as a learner, and in profession, that faith only which is now delivered to thee by the Church and sustained by all the Scripture." \* "To whom," says Tertullian, A.D. 195, "belongs the very faith? Whose are the Scriptures? By whom, and

\* St. Cyril, Catech., §§ 33, 35.

through whom, and when, and to whom was that discipline delivered whereby men become Christians? For wherever the true Christian rule and faith shall be shown, there will be the true Scriptures, and the true expositions, and all the true Christian traditions." \* Every doctrine of the Catholic Church denied by Protestants has been the ancient and unchanging doctrine of the Christian fathers, who in their controversies with heretics have always appealed to the testimony of the Scriptures.

What we have already said confutes the accusation of wilful ignorance; as we have abundantly shown that the Church in every way encouraged the knowledge and study of the inspired word, which she preserved and delivered unto the successive ages of men. In real understanding of the Scriptures and devout study of their meaning the days before the Reformation far exceed our own; and of the learning and profundity of the great writers of the middle age every scholar must stand in admiration. They are the fountains of thought from which we must draw, for the comprehension of the spirit and letter of the sacred text. "The religious of the middle ages gave their whole life to the labor of copying and translating the Bible into the vulgar tongues of various na-

\* Tertullian, "De Præscr.," n. 15.

tions, that the unlearned might become the readers of the word of God. In the cloister they studied the Scriptures and elucidated them by their careful commentaries; in their schools they taught their pupils to understand them; in the universities their lectures embodied the results of their zealous studies and prayerful meditations; in their libraries the Bible lay open to the search of all who sought to scan the sacred record; in their churches Bibles were placed for the use of the laity, and concordances attached to facilitate their researches; when they mounted the pulpit it was to inculcate upon their hearers the duty of reading and meditating upon the Scriptures, and to preach those noble sermons which are gemmed with quotations from the inspired writings, and in which the language and imagery of Scripture appear in every line. No sooner had human skill devised a means of book-multiplication, whose rapidity of action surpassed the boldest dream of the ancient copyists, than they engaged at once its co-operation, and caused the Bible to issue in vast abundance from the press, in almost every tongue spoken in the Christian world." \*

If it be still said that the Catholic Church is opposed to the diffusion of the Bible, there can be no

\* Buckingham, p. 69.

chance of persuading those who are determined to believe a lie. Yet weak must be the cause which rests upon the propagation of falsehood.

If it be said that the Church opposes the action of modern Protestant Bible societies as dangerous to faith and morals, the answer is obvious. She opposes the circulation of any version not approved and examined by her pastors. And she objects in the strongest terms to the principle maintained by these associations, that the circulation of the Scriptures, without note or explanation, is the proper way to evangelize the world. Of this principle and its results we shall have more to say when we speak of the Protestant use of the word of God. Let the tree be judged by its fruits, and the principle by its effects.

Before closing this lecture we will, however, refer for a moment to the fact that the triumph of the Reformation led to the restriction of the Scriptures. The statute of Henry VIII. of England enacted that "no women not of gentle or noble birth, nor journey-men, artificers, or apprentices, should read the Bible or the New Testament in English, to themselves or others, openly or privately." And even Martin Luther, with all his inconsistencies, pays this tribute to the Church: "It was an effect of God's power that in the Papacy should have remained the text of the holy

Gospel, which it was the custom to read from the pulpit in the vernacular tongue of every nation.”

We believe, then, that we have in this brief lecture exposed and answered the pretensions of the Protestant Reformers. If the pretext for their revolutionary movement be absolutely false, little can be expected from their erratic and inconsistent course. No solid foundation can rest upon an untruth. The shifting sands of unbelief are firmer than falsehood. But we would look for the logical result which history presents to us, and expect to see the sacred word of God hurled down from its high place, its inspired text mutilated by human caprice, and its divine authority denied among men. Fearful is the unhallowed touch of man, sad the exercise of his liberty, when the things of God are exposed to the fury of unbelief. One lie propagates another, and falsehood of every kind arrays itself against the divine majesty whose essence is Truth.



## LECTURE SECOND.

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*THE PROTESTANT DOCTRINE CONCERN-  
ING THE BIBLE.*





## LECTURE SECOND.

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### *THE PROTESTANT DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE BIBLE.*

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“No prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time : but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost.”—2 St. PETER i. 20, 21.

I THINK it will be confessed that all Protestants who call themselves Christians profess in some way to draw their doctrine from the Scriptures, which they believe to come from God. There have been many changes in their doctrines ; and some, who vindicate to themselves the Christian name, deny the inspiration of the Bible either in whole or in part. Still, with more or less unanimity, they contend that their religion is a Scriptural one, that to them in a peculiar sense belong the inspired writings, because for them they have thrown everything else away, even the church, priesthood, and altar. Rigidly, they have nothing left them but the Bible, and so their faith and hope are purely *Biblical*.

It will be the purpose of this short discourse to examine their doctrine, and see how it will bear the test of logic and of fact. We will demonstrate that in rigor of truth they have no Bible, and are truly bereft of their only hope. Every system must bear the test of logic, or fail by self-contradiction. Facts are sterner teachers than the masters of the schools, and no one can contravene their lessons. We commend, in the spirit of Christian charity, the argument of this lecture to the sincere who seek for truth, and are willing for its sake to sacrifice all earthly considerations.

The plan of our discussion leads us to examine, first, the Protestant doctrine concerning the Bible, and, secondly, to show its absurdity or impossibility in logic and in fact.

## I.

The doctrine of Protestants is that the inspired Scriptures are the sole rule of faith, as interpreted by the individual.

We believe we do not in any way misrepresent their belief ; and for the vindication of our statement we shall quote their own authorities. Thus Dr. Schaff, professor of Biblical literature in the Union Theological Seminary, New York, says : “The various Evangelical Protestant churches, viewed as distinct ecclesiastical organizations and creeds, take their rise di-

rectly or indirectly from the sixteenth century; but their principles are rooted and grounded in the New Testament." "The absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Christ and His Gospel, in doctrine and life, in faith and practice, is the animating principle, the beating heart of the Reformation, and the essential unity of Protestantism to this day." "The objective, generally called the formal, principle of Protestantism maintains the absolute sovereignty of the Bible, as the only infallible rule of the Christian faith and life, in opposition to the Roman doctrine of the Bible and tradition as co-ordinate rules of faith." "Protestantism is the religion of freedom; Romanism the religion of authority." "Protestantism is the Christianity of the Bible; Romanism that of tradition." \* This "Scripture principle" is the characteristic, and even foundation, of all the Protestant creeds. "The Augsburg Confession, which is the first and most important of all the Lutheran symbols, does not mention the Bible-principle at all, but it is based upon it throughout. The Articles of Smalcald mention it incidentally, and the Form of Concord more explicitly. But the Reformed Confessions have a separate article concerning the Holy Scripture, as the only rule of faith and discipline, and put it at the head,

\* Dr. Schaff, "Hist. of Creeds," I. 205, 208.

sometimes with a full list of the canonical books.” \* We will proceed, then, to quote the exact language of some of the principal Protestant articles of faith which set forth this doctrine. The Form of Concord, A.D. 1576, as its name imports, was designed to settle controversies which arose among the divines of the Augsburg Confession.

Its first article is : “ We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm according to which all dogmas and all doctors ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and the New Testament.”

The Confessions of Berne, A.D. 1528, declare that “the Church of Christ cannot make laws and commands which are not in the word of God,” and that “all traditions called ecclesiastical do not oblige us except they are founded and taught in the Scriptures.”

The Helvetic Confessions, A.D. 1563, teach that “the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the true word of God, and have sufficient authority in and of themselves, and not from men, since God Himself *still speaks to us through them* as he did to the fathers, prophets, and apostles. They contain all that is necessary to a saving faith and a

\* Dr. Schaff, “ Hist. of Creeds,” I. 216.

holy life.” “We acknowledge only that interpretation as true and correct which is fairly derived from the spirit and language of the Scriptures themselves, in accordance with the circumstances, and in harmony with other and plainer passages. We do not despise the interpretation of the Greek and Latin fathers, and the teaching of councils, but subordinate them to the Scriptures ; honoring them as far as they agree with the Scriptures, and modestly dissenting from them when they go beyond or against the Scriptures. In matters of faith we cannot admit any other judge than God himself, who through His word tells us what is true and what is false.”

The French Confession, A.D. 1559, gives the list of the canonical books which it receives, and says : “We know these books to be canonical and *the sure rule of our faith*, not so much by the common accord and consent of the Church as by the testimony and *inward illumination* of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to distinguish them from other ecclesiastical books, upon which, however useful, we cannot found any articles of faith. We believe that the word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from Him alone, and not from men. Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or custom, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgments, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles, should

be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but, on the contrary, should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them."

The same declaration is made by the Belgic Confession, A.D. 1561: "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the *regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith*; believing, without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts that they are from God, *whereof they carry the evidence in themselves*." "We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is *sufficiently* taught therein." "Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule."

The same doctrine is taught in the Scotch Confession, A.D. 1560: "All things necessary to salvation are *sufficiently expressed* in the Holy Scriptures."

The Articles of the Church of England, A.D. 1571, assert that "Holy Scripture containeth *all things necessary to salvation*, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

The Irish Protestant Convocation, A.D. 1615, declares, "the ground of our religion and the *rule of faith* and all-saving truth is the word of God. The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and are able to instruct sufficiently in all points of faith that we are bound to believe."

The Westminster Confession, A.D. 1647, teaches that "the Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, to be the *rule of faith* and life." "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." The same doctrine is contained in the Westminster Catechism: "The word of God which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and the New Testament is the *only rule* to direct us how we may enjoy and glorify Him."

To come to still more recent times, the declaration of the Congregational Churches of England and Wales sets forth that "the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as received by the Jews; and the books of the New Testament, as received by the primitive Christians, are divinely inspired and of *supreme authority*."

The National Congregational Council of the United States, at Oberlin, A.D. 1871, teaches that "the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient *and only infallible rule* of religious faith and practice."

The Baptist Confession, at New Hampshire, A.D. 1833, proposes "the Holy Bible, written by men di-

vinely inspired, as the *supreme standard* by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried."

The same doctrine is asserted, and in nearly the same words, by the Free-will Baptists, A.D. 1834.

The Evangelical Free Church of Geneva, A.D. 1848, has this first article: "We believe that the Holy Scriptures are entirely inspired of God in all their parts, and that they are the *only and infallible rule of faith.*"

The Methodist Articles of Religion, A.D. 1784, contain in regard to the Scriptures the exact words of the Church of England which we have already quoted.

The Reformed Episcopal Church, A.D. 1875, reasserts the same doctrine, and adds that "the Scripture not only contains the oracles of God, but *it is itself the very* oracles of God."

The doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance, A.D. 1846, adopted in the American branch A.D. 1867, sets forth "the divine inspiration, authority, and *sufficiency* of the Holy Scriptures."

These quotations are sufficient to demonstrate that it is the Protestant doctrine that the Holy Scriptures are the sole rule of faith.

That, according to this doctrine, they are to be interpreted by the individual, and not by any authority external to himself, appears to be abundantly manifest



First, Protestants admit no authority which is infallible except the Scriptures; and no fallible authority can dictate to the conscience of any one. In this point all men are equal, and God only can reveal His will to any man. Every one may gather what assistance he can in the interpretation of the inspired word, but he only can decide for himself the meaning of the sacred text. This proposition needs no demonstration. “The Bible *is* an infallible authority, and speaks for itself. There is no other infallible voice to which man may listen.” This doctrine is directly asserted in all the Confessions, which declare the Bible to be the *only rule of faith*. But these Confessions go so far as to expressly charge the Church with error, to deny her authority, and to reject the weight of tradition. The Form of Concord expresses its view of tradition when it declares that the “Holy Scriptures are the only *judge, norm, and rule* according to which, as by the only touchstone, all doctrines are to be examined. But the other symbols (*creeds*) and writings of the fathers do not possess the authority of a judge.”

The Second Helvetic Confession “rejects human traditions which, although clothed with specious titles, as if they were divine and apostolical, yet differ from the word written.” The Scotch Confession denies the authority of the Church in regard to the

Scriptures, and asserts that all councils are to be tried by the plain word of God. It also declares that some of the General Councils have erred in matters of great weight and importance. The Church of England charges the whole Church of Christ with error when it asserts that "the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome has erred in matters of faith," and propounds the doctrine that "the Church cannot decree anything contrary to the written word of God, or so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another." This article, which expresses the general belief of Protestants, assumes that the whole Church may fall into error, and that its interpretation of Scripture, if such be attempted, is to be subjected to the individual, who will receive or reject it, according as he finds it consonant or discordant with his sense of the inspired text. There is no other arbiter but the judgment of every individual man. According to the same Church of England, General Councils are subjected to the will of princes, and, while they have erred in things pertaining to God, are also liable to err, so that "the things ordained by them have neither strength nor authority, unless it be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture."

It is hardly necessary to multiply testimonies upon this point, since all Protestants will agree that the

Church has no authority to interpret Scripture for any one, and that councils and tradition are only human in their character, and therefore liable to err and exposed to change. There then remains for mankind but one infallible authority, namely, that of the Bible, which is to be given to every one, that he may read and judge for himself the voice of inspiration.

But, secondly, the Protestant Confessions directly assert the right and duty of private judgment, and declare that the reading of the Scriptures is the one way of the revelation of divine truth.

Thus the Belgic Confession, already quoted, founds the belief in the inspiration of God's word on the internal evidence of the books and the witness of the Holy Ghost in the individual heart. This evidence is wholly subjective, and peculiar to each one, who, if he receive the Bible as divine, must do so on such testimony of the Holy Ghost to himself. If this be true of the inspiration of the sacred books, it is *à fortiori* much more true of their meaning. The whole question of Scripture, the only infallible rule, is submitted to the judgment of each individual man.

The Westminster Confession speaks in plain words : "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself." "The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers,

doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture.” And “our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures is from the *inward work* of the Holy Ghost, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.”

The doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance among all *orthodox* Protestants asserts “the right and duty of *private judgment* in the interpretation of the Scriptures.”

The Society of Friends, with perfect consistency, make the Holy Spirit, in His inward operation upon the individual soul, the *primary* rule, and the Scriptures the *secondary* rule of faith. “They are to be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty; for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them, so they testify that the Spirit is that guide by which the saints are led into all truth.”

These doctrinal statements flow directly from the fundamental principle of Protestantism as asserted by the fathers of the Reformation. They were obliged to deny the authority of the Church, else they could in no way justify their schism. They were forced to throw all upon the work of God in the individual

conscience, else they could not free themselves from the obligation of the received Christian faith. Accordingly, they represented all human concurrence in the work of salvation not only as unnecessary but as impossible, and proposed the idea that whoever addressed himself immediately to the Bible obtained an immediate knowledge of its contents. They gave everything to the subjectivity of the believer. So Luther declares "that the believer is the *freest* judge of all his teachers, since he is *inwardly instructed* by God alone." \* And Zwinglius says, "The sheep of God follow the word of God alone, which can in nowise deceive"; and he compares "the word of Scripture to the Word of God, by whom all things were created out of nothing." "To explain the mode of operation of the divine word, he appeals to that *internal* word which came to the prophets of the old covenant, and which, without the aid of human reflection and mental activity, took possession of those to whom it was addressed, and brought them under subjection." † "The believer," said Luther, "is *internally taught* by God alone."

\* Luther, "Inst.," II. 584.

† Moehler's "Symbolism," 385.

## II.

We proceed now to show the absurdity of this doctrine, and to demonstrate that Protestants, tried by this test, have never had a Bible, and can never have one; and, secondly, that, taking one against the logic of their own faith, it proves of no value to them.

The argument is very simple and unanswerable.

1. The Bible is a collection of books which are inspired by the Holy Ghost. It differs from all other books in this respect, that its words come from the work of the Spirit of God upon human hearts. There is no need to discuss this point, because all Protestants who receive the Scriptures acknowledge them to come from God, and that their spiritual and moral teachings are of divine authority. Now, the Bible cannot prove itself, nor vindicate its own character; and two things are absolutely necessary that it may be recognized as the word of God. The authenticity of the writings must be rigidly demonstrated, and their inspiration established beyond all possibility of doubt. And this must be done by each individual, who can conscientiously in no way rid himself of this responsibility. Let it be understood that the reading of the Bible is the only way of knowing divine truth revealed, and therefore the only way of salvation. It is necessary, therefore, for the

salvation of each man that he know what the Bible is, and that he read it attentively in order to save his soul. If he cannot delegate the interpretation of the sacred text to any one else, much less can he delegate the more important question as to the existence of the Bible and its contents.

Every man must, then, investigate for himself the authenticity of the inspired books, and prove to his own satisfaction that they were really written by those whose names they bear, and that in the lapse of time there have been no interpolations nor changes. This is the work of a life-time even for the highly educated, but, strictly speaking, it must be discharged by each one in his turn. He must go through the history of manuscripts and be able to understand the original text.

Doubly is this necessary for Protestants, because the Bible was so many years in the hands of the Catholic Church, whose word cannot be trusted, and whose custody is suspicious. The Catholic Church is charged with being opposed to the diffusion of the Scriptures, on account of their denial of her claims. Why, then, should she not have altered the original text, and made use of her opportunity to make the Bible suit her doctrines? Every age must, then, be carefully examined, and all the history of every book claiming to be inspired thoroughly weighed. The

translations must be compared word by word with the original, and their correctness demonstrated by the most rigid criticism. Until this be done, no Protestant who would be consistent with himself can know what the Bible is, or that there is such a thing as a Bible.

This work, which must be discharged by every individual, is simply impossible. It is impossible to the most learned, and much more to the ignorant. If it be said that one may rely upon the testimony of others and the researches of Biblical scholars, we reply that all such testimony is fallible and liable to deceive. Such aid may prove of service, but cannot be relied upon as certain, because no man is infallible. We come back to the plain fact that the work of investigation must be performed by each one in his turn, or he cannot be sure that he possesses the inspired word of God.

But, secondly, the question of *inspiration* is a still more difficult one to determine. When the consistent Protestant has satisfied himself that among all the apocryphal books and spurious gospels he has the authentic Scriptures, written by those holy men whose names they bear, and preserved without change for nineteen centuries in manuscript, and copy, and printed translation; then he will have to prove that these writings are inspired by the Holy Ghost;



that these, and only these, are the divine revelation. How will he accomplish this? How will any one render himself positively sure that these writers here spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? He must establish this inspiration in his own heart alone, and no external testimony can be of avail to him. God alone can certify to this act of His Spirit, and prove that the words written are indited by His agency. No external testimony which is not divine can here be admitted, since it is a divine fact which needs to be established; and of such facts God alone can be a witness. In true logic there is no such external testimony to a Protestant. The Church is fallible, and for centuries has fallen into gross error. His own church is only the aggregation of individuals, and possesses no more authority than its members. The testimony of the Catholic Church on this point would be open to the gravest suspicion, and, its infallibility being denied, can be of no weight in a question as to a divine fact.

History is only the record of events, and could not be a certain witness. It may be falsified, and can never be taken as a guide in the way of salvation. Besides, history only testifies that the Catholic Church received and certified the Holy Scriptures for many centuries, and this will be of no weight to one who denies the authority, and even Christianity, of the Church.

The opinion of the majority is also unavailable here for the same reason. The majority of men are not infallible, nor is there any surety that their accord will establish a fact which concerns the invisible operation of the Holy Spirit. If the voice of the majority were uniform and clear, this alone would not demonstrate the divinity of the Scriptures.

No witness whatever but an infallible one can be sufficient; and to the Protestant there is no such witness.

He is then driven to the assertion of an internal testimony, and a witness within him of the Spirit. Such is, in fact, the teaching of the Westminster Confession: "Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Scriptures is from the *inward* work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our *hearts*." So also the Belgic Confession clearly states the true and only consistent Protestant ground: "We receive the Scriptures, not because the Church receives and approves them, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth *in our hearts* that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves."

Such was the position taken by Luther and the chief Reformers. He received the Scriptural books which he approved, on the ground of *his sense* of

their inspiration. He had no more authority than any one else in this matter, and what he did, every one else has the right to do. Thus he gives his judgment on the Scriptures, and rejects several of the books of the Old Testament. "Judith," says he, "is a good, serious, brave tragedy. Tobias is an elegant, pleasing, godly comedy. Ecclesiasticus is a profitable book for an ordinary man. Of very little worth is the book of Baruch, whoever the worthy Baruch may be. Esdras I would not translate, because there is nothing in it which you might not find better in Æsop. The first book of the Machabees might have been taken into the Scriptures, but the second is rightly cast out, though there is some good in it."

"St. John's Gospel, St. Paul's Epistles, especially that to the Romans, and St. Peter's First Epistle are the true marrow and kernel of all the books of the New Testament. These books show thee Christ, and teach *all* which it is needful and blessed for thee to know, even if you never hear or see any other book or any other doctrine. Therefore is the Epistle of St. James a right *strawy* epistle compared with them, for it has no character of the Gospel in it. I do not hold this epistle to be the writing of any apostle, for these reasons: it contradicts St. Paul and all other Scripture, in giving righteousness to good works; secondly, it teaches Christian people, and yet does not once

notice the passion, the resurrection, the Spirit of Christ." "I applaud the Epistle of St. Jude, though it cannot claim to be reckoned among the capital books which ought to lay the foundation of faith." Of the Apocalypse he simply says: "No man ought to be hindered from holding it to be a work of St. John or otherwise. Though it be a dumb prophecy, the true Christian can use it for consolation and warning." \*

The same right of private judgment is used by Zwinglius, Ecolampadius, and other Reformers. Dr. Westcott, an English Protestant, admits that "the settlement of the English Bible-canon was determined in England, no less than on the Continent, without critical discussion, by *the tacit consent of the leaders of the Reformation.*" †

"All Christians," says Luther, "enjoy in common the spiritual priesthood, and may take on them the office of preaching in its true sense. We are all priests in Christ; all have power and authority to judge."

This plain statement of the Protestant doctrine is the only consistent one. No other can be advanced which will not destroy the whole theory of the Reformation. It follows, therefore, that this right of

\* Prefaces of Luther to the Books of Scripture.

† Westcott's "Bible in the Church," p. 288.

private judgment must be pushed to its strict conclusions. No one can receive the sacred books, unless he has proved their authenticity, and been fully satisfied by the internal witness of the Holy Ghost in his own heart that they are inspired. As to the first, no one has ever been able to do it; and as to the second, the assertion of the subjective work of God in the individual heart is open to the gravest trouble and difficulty. Each one is a witness to himself, and, in the work of detecting the marks of inspiration, must claim to himself a divine influence almost equal to that of the sacred writers. Very few of Protestants have asserted such a claim; and those who have done so, have exposed themselves, by extravagance and contradiction, as the victims of delusion. Under these conclusions of logic, and conditions of fact, we do not see how any intelligent Protestant can know the word of God, or be sure of its divine character. If he receive the Bible as the rule of his faith, he will do so without any certainty or infallible authority. As there is nothing else in Protestantism, it will result that he can have no divine faith in that which is his only guide in the way of salvation.

2. Very few of what are called orthodox Protestants are, however, logical. They contradict themselves at every turn, and sometimes are traitors to their first principles. They assume the authenticity

and inspiration of the Scriptures, and proceed to exercise their private interpretation upon them, as if these great questions were settled. The extent of their assumption is, that the way of salvation is only to be known and followed by the reading of the Bible, which they have accepted as divine. Our blessed Lord, who, to redeem our race, became man, has been pleased to commit His Gospel to writing, and by means of written books to make known His saving grace. They who would avail themselves of His redemption must read here His word, and, by the aid of the Holy Ghost, seize its true sense and obey it unto righteousness. We have demonstrated that, in rigor of truth, they have no Bible and can have none. We now proceed to show that, even if they could have one, their way of salvation is impossible, and so that their Scriptures will prove of no use to them.

First, the great majority of mankind can never avail themselves of this, the only means of salvation. Before the invention of printing, A.D. 1438, the sacred books were in manuscript, and, though copied with great care and zeal by the Catholic priesthood; those who could avail themselves of direct knowledge of them were very few. A certain amount of scholarship was necessary, which belonged to the smallest portion of mankind. Nearly fifteen centuries of the Christian era passed without the invention of print-

ing, which could bring the inspired text before the knowledge of the multitude. Even now, when learning is more general, what is the proportion of our race able to read the printed copy of the Bible? The way of salvation then, according to Protestants, was utterly closed to the greater part of mankind. We say nothing here of the absurdity of the theory that a merciful God and divine Saviour could propose a plan of salvation which should be unavailable to nearly the whole race. A merely human teacher should have had more wisdom; and if our Lord had purposed to save men by the reading of the Bible, He should have taught His apostles to print, and sent them with their presses throughout the earth. Instead of this, He leaves the fountains of life sealed, and the Scriptures in manuscript for fifteen centuries. There is very little mercy in this view of God. The sacred canon was not even settled until the fourth age, and apostles and bishops confined themselves to preaching and administering the sacraments, when they might better have spent all their time in copying the inspired word, and praying the Holy Ghost to teach them how to multiply more rapidly the Scriptures. Of what use were their exhortations and their interpretations of the sacred writers? Not by the instrumentality of teachers, but by their own personal reading, were the redeemed to be saved. No

one had the right to assume the duty of interpretation for another. By so doing they were keeping back the oracles of God from the people. Here, then, before printing, and even after printing, as mankind generally are found, the Bible is not available as the rule of faith. It seems to us unnecessary to multiply proofs at this point. The plan of evangelizing the world by means of a book which all must read, is one not only impossible in itself, but destined to total failure.

Secondly, even those who can make use of the Scriptures, according to the theory of private interpretation, can accomplish little by their reading. The sacred text is often obscure, and where it is apparently plain, there is always ground for difference of opinion. I do not know that any one will assert that the inspired writings are always easy of interpretation. If there be such a one, facts and common sense contradict him. St. Peter says that "no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation," and he also says that in "the Epistles of St. Paul there are certain things *hard to be understood*, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they also do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." \* Even Luther with all his self-confidence, admits that "it is a great

\* 2 St. Peter iii. 16.



and difficult thing to understand the Scriptures. Five years' hard labor are required to understand either the 'Georgics' or 'Bucolics' of Virgil; an experience of twenty years to be master of the epistles of Cicero; and one hundred years' study of the prophets Elias, Eliseus, of St. John the Baptist, of Christ and the apostles, to get a *mere insight* into the Scriptures." It is idle and puerile to assert the simplicity of the inspired word, and its plain teaching of fundamentals, when experience has demonstrated how men equally sincere differ. The variations of Protestantism all spring from the private interpretation of the Bible, and these variations touch the most essential points of revelation. They touch the whole economy of the atonement, and the application of the merits of Christ. They touch in all its parts the question of redemption. They even touch the being and attributes of God. All Protestants as interpreters are equal in authority, and no one can divest himself of his responsibility or delegate his duty to another. The Holy Ghost must work in his own individual heart in union with the written word, that he may embrace the grace of Christ to his justification. All Protestant sects stand upon the same platform, and are all entitled to the same weight of authority. They are aggregations of individuals who are no greater nor less by their aggregation. Facts in the history of Protes-

tantism demonstrate that the reading of the written word has been the fruitful source of disunion. But the truth is *one* and invariable, and therefore the Bible without note or comment has not proved the means of finding out the truth. Rather has it been the foundation of enormous and conflicting errors.

A further proof that private interpretation defeats the very end of Holy Scripture may be seen in the fact that the plainest texts, where no unprejudiced child should mistake the sense, are perverted to mean either nothing or the contrary of their literal expression. Thus it has so happened by divine Providence that the parts of the Catholic creed especially assailed by the Reformation are just those which are stated by the inspired writers in the plainest terms.

Our Lord says : "Thou art Peter [*i.e.*, a rock], and upon this rock I will build my Church. And I will give to thee [Peter] the keys of the kingdom of heaven." \* Nothing can be simpler on the supposition that our divine Redeemer meant what He said and knew what He meant. But Protestantism makes Him say worse than nothing. Peter was not the rock, though God called him such, and he received nothing which was not the property of the apostles. And this is the stultification of the sacred text, in

\* St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

spite of the universal reception of St. Peter's headship of the Church for centuries, both as a doctrine and a fact.

Our Lord says: "Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." \* And in the institution of the divine Eucharist He says: "This *is* my body. This *is* my blood." †

But these so simple words are distorted to deny their plain sense, and make our Lord say only a trite truth, which could have been much better expressed in proper language. No novice in teaching would have been guilty of such folly, and if He did not mean what His words expressed, He is simply a deceiver.

Again, He says to the apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them"; ‡ but this self-evident passage is of no meaning whatever. Our Lord must have been mocking their credulity, for He never gave any one the power to forgive sin, and He never could do so. We might ask in all simplicity, then, What did the Son of God mean when He said these words and breathed upon the kneeling disciples?

St. James says: "If any man be sick among you,

\* St. John vi. 54.

† St. Matt. xxvi. 26-28.

‡ St. John xx. 23.

let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”\* Christian antiquity for centuries saw in this passage the manifest reference to the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Protestantism calls this a foolish and superstitious ceremony, and the Church of England declares that “it has grown from the corrupt following of the apostles.”

But why multiply citations? The main peculiarities of reformed doctrine are the most ingenious and unnatural twistings of the inspired word. The great theory of justification by faith has not one plain text to support it, but is the torture of passages of St. Paul which even Luther admitted were contradicted by St. James.

The doctrine of predestination adopted by many of the Reformers is a terrible calumny against the mercy of God, depending upon texts whose meaning is perverted to the denial of the divine attributes. There is no sect, however extravagant, which does not draw its authority from the Bible. And, in face of all these facts, we cannot but conclude that the Scriptures, submitted to the private judgment of each individual, have produced every religious and moral evil. The fault is not in the word of inspiration, but in its

\* St. James v. 14.

unhallowed and unauthorized use. God's own word has been made, by the artifice of the devil, the ruin of many souls. We quote from the language of the Protestant Bishop Jebb: "The Bible, indiscriminately scattered through the land, may be rendered instrumental to the most wicked purposes. Men without faith, hope, or charity are laboring to convert that volume into the text-book of anarchy and atheism. The book, chapter, and verse are unblushingly referred to, whence a disastrous and diabolical chemistry extracts the poison of blasphemy and unbelief. The shops, the markets, the stalls, the very courts of justice, are saturated with these materials of destruction, temporal and eternal. At such a time, and amidst such a deluge of unnatural impiety, the people ought to be set upon their guard. They ought to be instructed how possible it is to read the Scriptures, not only without profit, but with moral and spiritual detriment. They ought to be made sensible that the word of God, if it prove not a savor of life unto life, may become a savor of death unto death." \*

The argument, therefore, of this brief discourse demonstrates the Protestant doctrine concerning the Holy Scriptures to be false and fruitful of evil. It strips the inspired word of its authority, leaves it to

\* Jebb, "Practical Theology," I. 303.

the judgment of men, and makes it the pretext for unbelief and division. The children of the Reformation, tried by their own creed, have no Bible; and their use of the sacred text, which they have received on the authority of the Catholic Church, is the perversion of that which is most holy. The interpretation and explanation of the inspired books ought not to be made, and cannot be made, by the acumen and genius of each individual. They are not the work of man alone, "since holy men in them speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

"Learn hence," says St. Ambrose, "that Satan transforms himself, as it were, into an angel of light, and often sets a snare for the faithful by the means of the divine Scriptures themselves. Thus does he make heretics; thus weaken faith; thus attack the requirements of piety. Let not, therefore, the heretic ensnare thee because he is able to cite a few examples from Scripture; let him not assume to himself an appearance of learning. The devil also uses texts of Scripture, not to teach, but to circumvent and deceive." \*

To the same purport are these words of St. Jerome: "These things I have lightly touched upon, that you may understand that you cannot make your way

\* St. Ambrose, T. I. Expos. in IV. Luc.

into the Holy Scriptures without having some one to go before you and show you the road. I say nothing of grammarians, rhetoricians, geometricians, logicians, whose knowledge is of great use to mankind. But I will come to the inferior arts, such as are exercised not so much by the reason as by the hand. Even these artisans cannot become what they desire without the help of a teacher. The science of the Scriptures is the only one which all persons indiscriminately claim as theirs. This the babbling old woman, this the doating old man, this the wordy sophist, take upon themselves, tear to tatters, teach before they themselves have learned. Some, weighing out long words, with uplifted eyebrow, talk philosophy to a crowd of young women concerning the sacred writings. Others learn from women what to teach men ; and, as if this were not bad enough, they, with a certain facility of words, or rather effrontery, expound to others what they do not understand themselves. I speak not of those who, coming to the study of the Scriptures after that of secular learning, and by their eloquent language pleasing the popular ear, fancy that which they utter to be the law of God. They do not deign to learn what the prophets and the apostles thought, but they accommodate to their interpretation the most incongruous passages, as if it were something great to dis-

tort sentences, and to force the reluctant Scriptures to their own wishes." \*

"Foolish men," says St. Ephraem, "they are assiduous at Scripture, not to profit by pious reading, but that they may err more freely. They have turned aside from the stones set in the King's highway; and that they may wander with less restraint, they have plunged into pathless and desert places. But indeed to him alone who perseveres in keeping the King's highway will it be granted to possess the gifts and come into the presence of the King." †

\* St. Jerome, Ep 53 ad Paulin.

† St. Ephraem, Serm. 66.



## LECTURE THIRD.

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*THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE AMONG  
PROTESTANTS.*



## LECTURE THIRD.

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### *THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE AMONG PROTESTANTS.*

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“Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate ; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”—ST. MATTHEW xii. 25.

THE object of the present lecture is to set forth briefly the actual history of the Bible among Protestants. Having taken it into their own hands without any sufficient proof of its authority as the inspired word of God, they have been responsible for its use among themselves. It will be interesting to know precisely what they have done with it, and how far the Holy Scriptures in their hands have retained their sacred character. Our design will be accomplished by giving, first, a statement of the principal Protestant translations ; secondly, a view of the changes wrought by them in the canon of the Bible ; thirdly, an outline of the diversities of interpretation consequent upon their theory ; and, lastly, the pro-

gress and result of evangelization by means of the Scriptures alone.

## I.

As Protestantism began with Luther, our view of the translations of the Bible will naturally begin with the Reformation. There were many forerunners of Luther, of whose religious and moral character he has no occasion to be proud. The work of Wycliffe was in some respects the inspiration of the reformed movement. His translation of the Scriptures appeared in 1382. Of it the English writer, Canon Westcott, says: "Like the earlier Saxon translations, it was made from the Latin Vulgate. It was so exactly literal that in many places the meaning was obscure. The followers of Wycliffe were not blind to these defects, and within a few years after his death a complete revision of the Bible was undertaken by John Purvey." \* This revision, made about 1388, nearly displaced Wycliffe's, and was widely circulated among all classes until superseded by the printed versions of the sixteenth century.

The translation of Martin Luther, which is the first of the actually Protestant translations, was begun in 1522 and finished in 1532. The New Testament came

\* Westcott, "History of the English Bible," p. 13.

first; in a year came the Pentateuch; another year completed the historical books and the Hagiographa; two years more brought Jonas and Habacuc, and the prophets were published in 1532. The Brescia edition of 1494 was the foundation of Luther's work. He was assisted by Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and Cruciger. A writer in the "American Cyclopædia" tells us that "it threw all the previous German versions into the shade, assisted immensely in the spread of the Reformation, and, in spite of its many obscurities and *inaccuracies*, remains to this day in general use among the Protestant churches of the German tongue." \*

A Danish translation was made in 1550, into which Pedersen's translation of the New Testament and the Psalms was incorporated.

The Italian translation of Diodati appeared in 1603. Diodati, a zealous Calvinist, also published what he called a free translation of the New Testament, and a French translation of the Old Testament in 1644.

The first translation of the New Testament into the Welsh language was made in 1597 by William Salesbury, and the whole Bible was translated and completed by William Morgan in 1598.

A translation in the Bohemian language was pub-

\* "Am. Cyclopæd.," X. 789.

lished by the Church of the Bohemian Brethren. It appeared in several editions from 1579 to 1593.

The French Bible published at Neufchâtel in 1535, under the name of Olivetan, is no doubt the work of Calvin. Its title is: "The Bible; that is, all the Holy Scripture, in which are contained the Old Testament and the New, translated in French, the Old from the Hebrew and the New from the Greek."

Theodore Beza also published in 1556 a version of the New Testament, which passed through many editions; and took part in the translation of the Bible, revised from the Hebrew and Greek text, which was issued in 1588 by the pastors of the church in Geneva.

The first edition of the New Testament which was printed in English was that of Tyndale, which was probably executed at Worms in 1525.

The edition of Miles Coverdale followed in 1535, was published on the Continent, and dedicated to Henry VIII., "our Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, from the cruel hands of our spiritual Pharaoh."

The work of Tyndale, interrupted by his death, was continued by his friend, John Rogers, and was published in 1537 under the name of Thomas Matthew.

A translation was also made by R. Taverner in 1539 at London, which follows closely Matthew's Bible, with some significant changes.

Cranmer's Bible, or the Great Bible, appeared in 1540, and was appointed to be read in the churches.

The Genevan Bible was the work of English exiles at Geneva in 1560. It was generally received, and became for many years the popular Bible in England.

In 1568 the Bishops' Bible was published, bearing the sanction of the English bishops.

The commonly-received version of King James was published in 1611. It was the work of fifty-four divines appointed by the king. The Bishops' Bible was the basis of this edition, compared with Tyn-dale's, Coverdale's, and the preceding English translations, as well as with the original text. The commission also made important use of the Rhemish and Genevan versions.

It will be observed that none of these Protestant editions were dependent upon any ecclesiastical sanction, and such sanction would have given them no weight to those who received them.

To the translations we have enumerated are also to be added two Spanish versions, one by C. Reyna, which appeared in Basle in 1569, and another by C. de Valera at Amsterdam in 1602.

The English Bible published under the authority of King James has continued the generally-received translation among English and American Protestants. Grave objections have been made at various times to

its rendering of certain passages ; and in 1870 a new revision was recommended by the Convocation of Canterbury, to which it invited the co-operation of eminent scholars both in England and America. This revision will soon appear, and, according to the opinion of one of the commission, “will modernize the Bible and free it from its air of antiquity, and ere long take the place of the present version in pulpit and pew, in school and home, as presenting in clearer and truer form the meaning of the evangelists as they uttered the word of God.”

The American Bible Union seceded from the American and Foreign Bible Society when that body decided that it was not its province or duty to revise the English Bible. The primary end of this Union is to procure a thorough and faithful revision of the common English text. To accomplish this it has employed the aid of scholars of nine Protestant denominations. The committee is composed mainly of Baptists, though it professes to be impartial. The New Testament has had three revisions ; and versions of several of the books of the Old Testament have been already published. Objections have been made, however, to this revision, and it does not seem to possess the general approval of the Protestant sects.



## II.

We proceed now to note the changes which these translations have made in the canon of Holy Scripture.

Martin Luther took upon himself to expunge from the canon of inspired books those of the Old Testament called deuterocanonical. In his prefaces to these books he gives at length his opinion as to their character and authority. The result was that they were published as "Apocrypha," or books profitable for pious reading, but no part of the sacred text, because not inspired by the Holy Spirit. The catalogue in the edition of 1534 gives as "Apocrypha" Judith, Wisdom, Tobias, Ecclesiasticus, the two books of Machabees, parts of Esther, parts of Daniel, and the Prayer of Manasses.

From the canon of the New Testament he also rejects the Epistle to the Hebrews; the Epistle of St. James, which he says is unworthy of the apostle; the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse. These he placed at the end of his translation, after the others which he called "the true and certain capital books of the New Testament." Of the Epistle to the Hebrews he says: "It is certainly not by an apostle, and is not to be placed on the same footing with the apostolic writings." "The Epistle of

St. James is one of straw. I do not hold it to be his writing, and I cannot place it among the capital books.”

“The Epistle of St. Jude is indisputably an extract or abstract from the Second Epistle of St. Peter. It cannot be ranked among books which ought to lay the foundation of faith.” \*

These disputed books of the New Testament were called the “Antilegomena,” and were placed in an Appendix. Canon Westcott tells us that “the Lutheran Church has no recognized definition of canonicity and no express list of the sacred books.” † The Lutheran Bible has the Apocrypha by themselves, and the Antilegomena at the end of the New Testament. “The judgments which Luther delivered are not more favorable to one class than another. To a certain extent the question was left open, and *usage* only has determined the subordinate position of the Apocrypha to the Old Testament and elevated the Antilegomena of the New Testament to an equality with the remaining books.” ‡

The result of this interference with the received canon of Scripture appears in the language of the Reformers, who made themselves the judges of inspiration.

\* Luther's prefaces. † Westcott, “Bible in the Church,” p. 266.

‡ *Ibid.*, 266.

Carlstadt, the friend of Luther, and his co-laborer in the revision of the Bible, divides all the sacred books into three classes of different dignity. The first class contains only the Pentateuch and the four Gospels, which he calls "the clearest luminaries of the whole divine truth." The second class embraces the prophets and the epistles of the New Testament which Luther acknowledged; while the third contained the Hagiographa of the Hebrew canon, and the seven disputed books of the New Testament. Westcott declares his treatise to be "the first clear assertion of the supremacy of the Holy Scripture, and so far the first enunciation of the fundamental principle of the Reformation." \*

Calvin and his first followers rejected the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament, but left all the books of the New in the canon of Scripture. Calvin, in the exercise of his private judgment, expresses himself with the same boldness as Luther. He approves the Epistle to the Hebrews, though he does not believe that St. Paul was the author. He sees no good reason for rejecting St. James and St. Jude, and accepts the Second Epistle of St. Peter, though "in it he fails to recognize the genuine language of the apostle."

The edition of Beza is similar to that of Calvin in

\* Westcott, p. 268.

the arrangement of the canon, and his private opinion is given as the basis of action. He approves and defends the Epistle to the Hebrews, and sets aside the objections made by Luther to the other books of the New Testament.

The Church of England rejects the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament, giving the titles of them in its catalogue, in which are found the third and fourth books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, not received by the Catholic Church. Of these books, called "Apocrypha," it says: "They are to be read for instruction of manners and example of life, but that no doctrine can be established by them." "All the books of the New Testament it receives and accounts canonical." The Presbyterians, in the Westminster Confession, profess the same canon as the Episcopalians, with this difference, that they speak with much less respect of the deuterocanonical books. "These books, commonly called Apocrypha, as they are not divinely inspired, make no part of the canon of Scripture, and are of no authority in the church, and should only be used as human writings."

Since the edition of King James, which the Protestant sects have generally received, this view of the canon has been adopted among them. Some of the more recent sects, however, have raised doubts in re-

gard to special portions of the New Testament which they were unwilling to accept.

The Protestant Bible contained the canon of the English Church, and the apocryphal books were printed as an appendix to the Old Testament. This continued until the year 1826, when the British and Foreign Bible Society took the responsibility of expunging the deutero-canonical books from its editions, and passed a resolution that the "Apocrypha" should no longer be published, and that they would never aid any association that should publish them. To this decree of a Bible society Protestants generally have submitted, and hence all their recent editions of the Bible appear without these books, which are now little known among the sects. To this arbitrary action of a lay association, the Greek schismatical church, as well as many of the English Establishment, strenuously protested. Their protest, however, has proved unavailing, since this society has the control of the largest number of the Protestant Bibles, and at great expense circulates them throughout the world. In fact, very few are found even in the Episcopal communion who regard the deutero-canonical books as anything more than human.

In this brief outline of the changes made by the Protestant translators in the canon of Scripture two things will manifestly appear :

First, there is no pretence of any ecclesiastical authority for these changes ; and the great question as to the inspiration of the different books of the Bible is submitted wholly to the private judgment of the individual. It is a fundamental question which concerns the very existence of the inspired word ; it determines precisely what is the sacred text by which God has spoken ; yet it is left to private translators, who are permitted to act for others without even examination. The great mass of Protestants have quietly taken their word, and never think of weighing this momentous matter for themselves. The action of their churches would indeed give no more certainty, since they are only the projection of their members ; but at least it would be the voice of many, and not simply the word of one man. Speaking of the Swiss Reformers, Westcott says : “ Custom fixed the details of their judgment, and the idea of inspiration was substituted for that of canonicity. The test of authority was placed in individual sentiment and not in the common witness of the congregation.” \* “ The subject of the canon was determined in England, no less than on the Continent, without critical discussion, by the *tacit consent* of the leaders of the Reformation.” †

\* “ Bible in the Church,” p. 275.

† *Ibid.*, p. 288.

The conclusion, then, is that the Reformers and their followers have only human authority for their Bible, and human authority at its lowest point. They cannot know which are the inspired books, and the whole question of a Bible is a mere matter of opinion. They are free to accept Luther's canon or to reject it. They are free to reject one or all of the sacred writings.

Secondly, it also appears that there was grave difference of opinion among the fathers of the Reformation in regard to the canonicity and inspiration of the various scriptures. Some have thrown out a number of the inspired books with a free hand. Others have received only a portion of the New Testament, freely expressing their judgment as to the merits of the Epistles or Gospels. For Luther there is a hidden Gospel. "You can rightly judge," says he, "between all the books, and distinguish which are the best; for St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles, especially that to the Romans, and St. Peter's First Epistle, are the true marrow and kernel of all the books." Each individual must settle these differences for himself and decide among so many differing doctors. Protestants generally have no authority but the translation of the Bible which they accept. By this they settle all points of doctrine and morals. Is it not, then, to them a momentous fact that their

spiritual fathers, on whom they depend for the word of God, were at variance as to the most essential points? We may well repeat that, strictly tried, they have no Bible, and are not in possession of any certain canon of Holy Scripture.

To reject from the sacred text whole books and passages received by the Catholic Church as the divine revelation, bearing the same authority as all the other parts of the Bible, is surely a very serious matter. To do this against the judgment of Christian antiquity, on purely human authority, is a high-handed folly which has few parallels in ecclesiastical history. The closing words of the Apocalypse, rejected by so many of the Reformers, give their solemn warning: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from these things that are written in this book." \* And what shall be said of the curious spectacle of a society which takes the liberty to expunge a portion of the received Scriptures, and then draws the acquiescence of nearly all Protestantism to its arbitrary act? Time travels rapidly. Foundations laid on the sand sink beneath the changing surface. We expect to see many editions yet, in which other changes shall

\* Apoc. xxii. 19.



be made to suit the varying opinion of those who have no guide but their own judgment. The disputed parts of the Gospels shall be omitted, and the Epistles cut down by the arbitrary word of biblical criticism or sectarian prejudice. That is not divine which is subjected to the fluctuations of passion or the inconsistencies of the human intellect.

“The work begun by Luther has been pursued with ardor by his followers. The consequence is that scarcely one single book of the New Testament has escaped their destroying hands. Sieffert, Schultse, Schott, Fischer, De Wette, and Schneckenburger deny the authenticity of St. Matthew. Michaelis will not allow the canonicity of St. Mark and St. Luke. Schleiermacher thinks the Gospel of St. Luke to be the work of four different authors. Vogel, Horst, and Ballenstedt reject the Gospel of St. John. Baur denies the credibility of the Acts, and De Wette, bolder still, maintains that it betrays ignorance of Jewish manners, contains errors, and narrates miracles partly irrational, partly immoral. Semler and Eichhorn doubt the genuineness of the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Mayerhoff pronounces spurious that to the Colossians. Schmidt and Kern have their doubts about the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. The three Epistles to Timothy and Titus are repudiated by

Schleiermacher, Schott, Baur, Mayerhoff, and Schraeder. Credner and Neudecker have spared the Epistle to Titus, but give up as not genuine the two addressed to Timothy. The Catholic Epistles have fared worse, and have been sacrificed each in its turn. Luther condemned that of St. James as 'an epistle of straw,' but his early followers restored it to the canon. Kern and De Wette have again displaced it. The First Epistle of St. Peter is rejected by Cludius, the Second by Semler, Schott, Guericke, and others. The Second and Third Epistles of St. John are condemned by Fritzche, Paulus, and Credner, and all three by Lange, Cludius, and Bretschneider. The *unnecessary* Epistle of St. Jude is denied by Bolten, Dake, and Bergen. Finally, the Apocalypse, in spite of all its good service against the Roman Antichrist, has been thrust aside not only by Luther and Calvin, but also by some of their latest disciples—Semler, Michaelis, De Wette, Bretschneider, and many others." \*

### III.

We have seen the Reformers in their work of translating and altering the sacred word by the freedom of their opinions. Let us now take a slight view of

\* Very Rev. Dr. Corcoran, *American Catholic Quarterly*, January, 1879.

the happy family in the possession of their Scriptures, and behold the unity which resulted from their system of salvation. As there was no agreement in regard to the canon of the Bible, so there was no unanimity as to their translations or the meaning of the sacred text.

1. The judgment of Catholics will perhaps not be accepted by Protestants ; we therefore will briefly give some of the notes of the Reformers. When Luther's translation first appeared, the learned Emser detected no less than a thousand faults. The only reply he made to this was to launch out his vocabulary of abusive epithets. "These popish asses," said he, "are not able to appreciate my labors."

Martin Bucer, a brother Reformer, says that "his errors in translating were manifest and not a few." Zwinglius pronounces his Bible a corruption of the word of God. Hallam says: "The translation of the Old and New Testament by Luther is more renowned for the purity of its German idiom than for its adherence to the original text. Simon has charged him with ignorance of Hebrew ; and when we consider how late he came to the knowledge of that or the Greek language, it may be believed that his acquaintance with them was far from extensive." \* "It has been

\* Hallam, "Historical Literature," I. 201.

as ill spoken of among Calvinists as by the Catholics themselves."

The errors in Luther's version were not those of ignorance, but were a wilful perversion of the Scriptures to suit his own views. Let us note only a few examples. In St. Matthew iii. 2, he renders the word "repent, or do penance," by the expression "mend, or do better."

Acts xix. 18, "Many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds." Lest this should confirm the practice of confession, he refers the *deeds* to the apostles, and reads, "they acknowledge the miracles of the apostles." These errors were afterwards corrected by his followers. The expression "full of grace," in the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, he renders "thou gracious one." Romans iv. 15, "the law worketh wrath," he translates "the law worketh *only* wrath," thus adding a word to the text and changing its sense.

Romans iii. 28, "We account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law," he renders by the interpolating of a word, "We hold that a man is justified without works of the law by faith *alone*." His answer to Emser's exposition of his perversion of the text was: "If your Papist annoys you with the word (*alone*), tell him straightway: Dr. Martin Luther will have it so; Papist and ass are one and the same

thing.” “Whoever will not have my translation, let him give it the go-by; the devil’s thanks to him who censures it without my will and knowledge. Luther will have it so, and he is a doctor above all the doctors in popedom.”

The object of new translations was to correct errors, or to teach new doctrines by the perversion of the inspired text. Bishop Trevern says: “Æcolampadius and the theologians of Basle made another translation; but, according to the famous Beza, it was impious in many parts. The divines of Basle said the same of Beza’s version. In fact, adds Dumoulin, another learned minister, ‘he changes in it the text of Scripture.’ Speaking of Calvin’s version, he says that ‘he does violence to the letter of the Gospel, which he has changed, making also additions of his own.’ The ministers of Geneva believed themselves obliged to make an exact version; but James I., King of England, in his conference at Hampton Court, declared that of all the versions it was the most wicked and unfaithful.” \*

The version of Beza thus spoken of by the divines of Basle was in great measure the foundation of the English versions. The Very Rev. Dr. Corcoran, one of the most learned of American Catholic writers, thus

\* “Amic. Discussion,” I. 127.

speaks of Beza: "In the wicked art of insinuating dogmatical error by mistranslation he stands almost without a rival. In the abundance and recklessness of those perversions none have equalled him; in the effrontery which avowed and sought to justify them he is surpassed by none but Luther. Others, indeed, have sought to intrude their opinions into the sacred text by adroit omissions, additions, and false renderings; but they did it stealthily, for they were conscious of wrong and feared detection. Not so Luther and Beza, whose Bibles are the doctrinal foundations of the Lutheran and Anglican churches. They make no secret of their shame, but publish it, defend it, and glory in it. They pervert and mistranslate Scripture on theory and principle. Yet there is some difference between them. Luther quailed before the indignant outcry of the Catholic world, and in subsequent editions, from shame or policy, suppressed some of his worst perversions. We are not sure that the translator of Geneva ever retracted or corrected more than one passage.\*

The very reverend doctor has given, in the article from which we quote, abundant instances of this perversion of the sacred text. Time, however, will not allow us to allude to more than two or three of the

\* *American Catholic Quarterly*, July, 1879.

most striking, where the intention to mislead the reader is self-evident.

St. Peter, in his First Epistle, ii. 8, terms our Lord “a rock of scandal, to them who stumble at the word, and do not believe whereunto they are also set.” This is the Catholic version, conformable to the Vulgate (*in quo et positi sunt*), and thus it was rendered by some of the early Anglican Bibles: “they believe not that whereon they were set.” Beza, however, changes the word “set” into “created,” making the apostle to say that they were “unbelievers, unto which they were *created*.” Thus he would teach the doctrine of predestination of the wicked unto eternal death. So in Acts ii. 23, “Jesus of Nazareth, delivered up by the determinate counsel and *foreknowledge* of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain,” he renders *foreknowledge* by *providence*, intimating the divine concurrence in the death of our Lord.

In St. John i. 12 we read: “To as many as received Him, He gave *power* to be made the sons of God.” This is the plain rendering of the original. Beza, however, seeing the exercise of free-will in this passage, mistranslates *power* into *dignity*, reading: “He gave them this dignity that they should become the sons of God.” The word *power* would imply free action, while *dignity* might be only the gift of God by His absolute decree of election.

St. James ii. 22: "Seest thou that faith did co-operate with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?" This is the translation of the Vulgate, and the literal rendering of the Greek. Beza must alter this plain teaching of the necessity of good works, and make the apostle say "faith was a *helper* of his works."

The teaching of St. Paul (1 Tim. ii. 4), "God, our Saviour, will have *all men* to be saved," he changes the text so as to say that He wills the salvation of men of all kinds; and the same mistranslation is made of the sixth verse, "He gave Himself a redemption for all."

In Acts xiv. 22 we read that the apostles Paul and Barnabas "*ordained* to them priests in every church." This text is made to read in Beza's version, "having chosen presbyters by election," making a gratuitous interpolation of the expression "by votes, or election."

In the same manner he mistranslates 2 Cor. viii. 19, "*ordained* by the churches companion of our travels," and renders it "chosen *by vote* of the churches as the companion of our journey." \*

There is not space to add here any more citations, but sufficient for our purpose have been given. Not

\* See *American Catholic Quarterly*, October, 1880.



only Catholics, but Anglicans, Lutherans, and even Presbyterians, have condemned the translation of Beza for its perversions of Scripture. It was also the custom of these Protestant revisers to add notes, by which they might still further advance their doctrines and justify their corruptions of the inspired word. This they continue to do even in our day, not only in the English language, but in every language into which they translate the sacred text. It is one of the arts of the Bible Society by which in foreign tongues, and to heathen lands, they seek to propagate their opinions.

If we refer to the English versions we shall find the same want of fidelity and unanimity on the part of the revisers. Between 1535 and 1611 seven different translations were made, and principally to satisfy difference of opinion. No copy was in any way authorized until the time of James I., and the editions of Tyndale and Coverdale were by many condemned as faulty. There was so much dissatisfaction with the prevailing editions of the Bible that the new translation was provided for, and afterwards authorized by King James. This version follows in many things that of Beza, which we have shown to be unfaithful. It had no sooner appeared than it was denounced as incorrect by many Protestant divines.

“Year after year men like Archbishop Newcome,

Symonds, Wakefield, and Blackwall suggested important alterations, and published what to them appeared more correct and amended editions of the written word."

"Lowth, one of the ablest scholars Protestantism can boast of, objects to the interpretation of the Old Testament adopted by the Masorites. And this system was followed by the English translators, who took the present Hebrew text, as it is printed by the Masorites, as the only sense and meaning of the Old Testament." \* Biblical scholars also have found great fault with the Greek text used by the translators of King James' Bible; and Mills and Bentley reckoned more than a thousand variations from the received Greek and Latin examples. Many corrections have been made since the first revision, but grave mistranslations exist to this day. Archbishop Kenrick proves by comparison of the original text, as edited even by Protestants, that the received version still retains five *grievous* perversions of the sense, in matters affecting doctrine.† For illustration, we give one of these wilful alterations of the original text. 1 Cor. xi. 27: "Whosoever shall eat this bread *or* drink this chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." In the

\* Waterworth, "Development of Anglicanism," p. 183.

† "Theol. Dog.," I. 427.

English version the translators have deliberately changed the word *or* into *and*, making the apostle to say, "Whosoever shall eat this bread *and* drink this cup." For this interpolation there is not the slightest excuse; and the only motive for the change was to attack the Catholic practice of Communion in one kind.

*Dean Stanley's*  
Also, in the account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, St. Matt. xxvi. 26, they have inserted the pronoun *it* without the slightest warrant of the original. The Greek text reads: "And while they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: "Take ye and eat: this is my body." The translators of King James make it read: "Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and broke *it*, and gave *it* to His disciples." One can hardly fail to see here the intention to attack the Real Presence, and make our Lord to speak of the bread as bread only, after His benediction.

Although this edition of King James has been generally received among English Protestants, still it has not been regarded as an absolute authority among them. The different sects have had their own translations and their own commentaries. There is a version of the New Testament, made by Campbell, McKnight, and Doddridge, in which the words *baptism* and *baptize* are rendered by *immersion* and *immerse*.

A new revision is now being made by scholars of the Church of England, and the principal Protestant churches here and abroad, on the ground of the incorrectness of the King James Bible in many respects. A writer in the *North American Review* says: "Beauty and antiquity of style are not the paramount considerations in the question of Bible translation. The *truth* is what we desire. All other objects sink into insignificance in comparison with this. We seek a *perfect* translation of the Hebrew and Greek." "The work of the revisers has been a double one—to ascertain the *genuine* original text, and then to *correct* or modify the English translation." \* The Rev. Dr. Hare, in the Episcopal General Convention, New York, 1880, thus spoke: "He had no objection to the pending resolution, though he firmly believed it would be with this revision of the authorized version as it was with the revision which came forth in 1611. To this day that revision has never had the authority of Convocation. In 1662 it was adopted for the Epistles and Gospels of our great days, but it was never adopted for the Psalter; it was never adopted for the passages of Scripture quoted in the Communion Office. So far from the edition of 1611 having been primarily the property of the

\* *North American Review*, November, 1880.

Anglican Church, as had been alleged, it had its origin in Protestantism, and it did not come into general use for half a century after the time of its publication, and then only because its superiority to the previous versions was so manifest that it could not but be recognized. This, he believed, would take place with the revision proposed in 1870.”

It is plain, then, from this brief outline, that there has never been a Protestant translation of the Scriptures which has been accepted by all as correct or without serious fault; and that no version has ever been adopted by any ecclesiastical authority possessing any binding force. This, indeed, in Protestant eyes would give no weight; but it demonstrates that the field is open to every individual, and that each one in the exercise of his private judgment must choose the translation to which he will go for the word of life. And as there is no *perfect* version in existence, nor one to which there are not many objections, we find the true Protestant placed in a serious dilemma. He needs the Bible for his salvation, and yet he cannot be sure that it can be found.

2. There was less agreement among the Reformers as to the meaning of the sacred text and its inspiration, than in regard to the translations. Let us briefly notice their divergency on these two points. When once the Bible was subjected to the private

interpretation of every individual, difference of doctrine was the immediate and natural result. Luther first argued from the Scriptures against the existence of free-will, making, in fact, God the author of sin. He also assailed the sacraments, and taught the doctrine of justification by faith alone without works of any kind, and without the means of grace. "Be a sinner," says he, "and sin bravely, but believe more bravely and rejoice in Christ, who is the victor of sin. We must sin as long as we are in the world." He attacked the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, and then towards the end of his life professed a theory of consubstantiation, denying still any change in the bread and wine.

His followers carried these teachings to their result, and Carlstadt assailed the Real Presence, arguing that it was wholly destitute of Scriptural proof. He challenged Luther to a discussion, and they met in the *Black Bear Inn* at Jena. "There the argument became animated and angry. While transgressing every law of propriety and decency, they discussed the Lord's Supper in a manner the most frivolous, and in language the most unbecoming. In closing they both pledged themselves to carry on the controversy in writing. 'Will you write openly against me?' said Luther. 'Yes,' replied Carlstadt, 'if it be agreeable to you; and I shall not

spare you.' 'Good!' rejoined Luther; 'there is a florin as an earnest.' 'May I see you broken on a wheel!' said Luther on taking leave of him. And 'may you,' retorted Carlstadt, 'break your neck before you get out of the city!'" \* Martin Bucer and Capito took his part against Luther in this Scriptural contest.

In his conflicts with his own spiritual children the war waxed bitterly; and constant appeals were made from Scripture to the writings of the Christian fathers. In reply he condemned them and their interpretations of the sacred text. "All the fathers," said he, "fell into error, and those of them that did not repent before dying are lost eternally." "St. Gregory knew very little about Christ or the Gospel, and was so superstitious as to be easily deceived by the devil." "St. Augustine often fell into error, and cannot be safely followed." "Jerome I regard as a heretic. He wrote many impious things, and deserves to be in hell rather than heaven." "Chrysostom is a sorry fellow, an empty declaimer—a great puff of smoke and little fire." "Basil is worthless; he is a monk through and through, and to my mind he is of no weight whatever." "Thomas Aquinas is a theological abortion,

\* Alzog, III 104.

a fount of error, whence issue all the heresies that subvert Gospel teaching.”

Zwinglius, the co-Reformer of Luther, and the father of more spiritual systems, drew from the Bible a faith entirely different from that of his companion. He denied free-will and taught the total depravity of human nature. In so many words, he makes God the author of sin, in terms even stronger than those of Luther; but he declared the sacraments to be empty signs, and denied any presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The Sacramentarians were his followers, and soon under their inspiration, the divine character of the Lord's Supper and the sacredness of baptism passed away. The sacramentarian controversy became most bitter, and led even to revolt and civil war.

The Anabaptists carried this doctrine to its legitimate result, and held that infant baptism was an invention of the Papists, and had no sanction in Holy Scripture. These reformers became quite numerous, and a synod was called at Hamburg in 1536 to devise means for exterminating them: The following decree was made against them. “Whoever rejects infant baptism, whoever transgresses the orders of the magistrates, whoever teaches the community of goods, whoever usurps the priesthood, whoever holds unlawful assemblies, whoever sins



against faith, shall be punished with *death*." This severity was, through the influence of Luther, visited upon those who in the exercise of their private judgment were interpreting Scripture, and who had in this matter an equal right with himself.

Zwinglius justly replied to the intolerance of his co-Reformers: "See how these men, who owe all to the word, would wish now to close the mouths of their opponents, who are at the same time their fellow-Christians. They cry out that we are heretics, and that we should not be listened to. They proscribe our books and denounce us to the magistrates." \*

In his turn, however, he became as fierce a bigot, and as intolerant a tyrant as his brethren. Menzel bears evidence that he declared against the Anabaptists, and caused several of them to be drowned.†

Calvin was another leader of the Reformation, who drew all his system of faith from the Bible. He taught the absolute predestination of the just to life, and of the unjust to death. The freedom of the will was thereby practically extinguished, and justification was only an imputation of the righteousness of Christ. He affirmed that sanctifying grace has no connection with the visible sign of the sac-

\* Audin., 411.

† Menzel, II. 233.

rament, and denied any change of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, teaching a sort of emanation from the Body of Christ at the moment of Communion. His teachings have been the foundation of the belief of many Protestant sects, which follow him to a greater or less degree to this day. When Calvin gained the ascendancy in a portion of Germany, he turned upon the Lutherans, whom he named the sons of the devil.\* More than a thousand Lutheran ministers were proscribed with their wives and children, and reduced to beg the bread of charity. Another Reformer, the superior in many respects of all, came forward with his *Scriptural* system, and has influenced the mass of Protestants as much as Luther or Calvin. Lælius Socinus, belonging to a noble family in Siena, was the author of a creed which his nephew, Faustus Socinus, more definitely promulgated. He denied the divinity of our Lord and the doctrine of the Trinity. According to him, original sin was the invention of theologians, and the sacraments were mere external ceremonies. His followers professed to be purely *Biblical*, and to follow the exact meaning of the inspired word. Their doctrine took shape in the form of a definite creed in A.D. 1579.

\* Abp. Spalding, I. 329.

It is unnecessary to dwell longer upon this point, as the variations of Protestant interpretation are self-evident. They are not only seen in the conflicting views of the first leaders of the Reformation, but in the history of the countless sects which have sprung from their teachings. One sect is equal in authority to another, possessing the same right to interpret Scripture, and wielding a power which no consistent Protestant can gainsay. Descending from the numberless sects to individuals, we find almost as many interpretations of the Bible as there are men able to read it. Each one in his place is the supreme judge, not only having the privilege to decide the meaning of the sacred text, but obliged in conscience to do so.

Let us notice the contradictions of some celebrated creeds, inasmuch as they are the confessions of the faith of many, and the parents of other religious families.

The Augsburg Confession, the original Protestant creed, A.D. 1530, teaches the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist, as well as auricular confession.

The Formula of Concord, A.D. 1576, reiterates the same doctrine.

The Saxon Articles, 1592, teach the Real Presence in still more exact words.

The Helvetic Confession, 1536, *denies* the Real Presence, as does also the Catechism of Heidelberg in 1563.

The same denial is made by the French Confessions in 1559 and 1561, and by the Belgic synod of the same year. The Scotch Creed, as well as the Articles of the Church of England, also reject the presence of Christ in the Holy Sacrament.

Dr. Döllinger, in his "Church and the Churches," dwells at length upon these variations of doctrine among the reformed believers in the Bible. We give his own words :

"In the history of sects which are not sunk into an inert state of vegetation, it is common to find them proceeding by fits and starts from one extreme to the other ; and it happens inevitably that the emanations of mere caprice groping in the dark, or of individual narrow-mindedness, have to serve as substitutes for the necessary results of organic institutions. Thus it happened that the two main branches of the American Puritans, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, being dissatisfied with their Westminster Confession, have introduced into their various congregations or synods a number of whimsical or extravagant confessions of faith ; so that, according to the statement of the preacher Colton, some hundreds of these formulas may be found among the Presbyterians, and you can hardly go from one town to another without coming upon a new creed, notwithstanding the simi-

larity of the sect. Colton, who filled the most influential offices in the Presbyterian Church, relates that he himself has organized above fifteen churches, and introduced into each of them a confession of faith drawn up by himself, but which had to be modified every time, according to the degree of his knowledge and the momentary character of his views. . . .

“Even those theologians who boast particularly of their faithful devotion to the Lutheran system are not orthodox. ‘The fact is obvious to every one,’ says Julius Muller, ‘that among all the Lutheran theologians who have lately published any comprehensive works in the domain of doctrines of faith, there is not a single one who does not consider the Lutheran symbolic books as requiring modification in some point or other.’ And here come into consideration definitions of profound importance. ‘For many years,’ said Ehrenberg, at the Berlin General Synod, ‘he had been looking for a man who agreed in all points with the symbolic books of his confession, but as yet he had never found one. . . .’

“The churches of the Reformation are in this predicament: they cannot subsist without a solemn declaration from their clergy and a settled doctrine; and neither can they subsist if they have either the one or the other. On one side it is said: ‘What can a church be from which every symbol has vanished;

what can it be but a Babel?' On the other side it is replied, and with perfect justice, too: 'A rigid binding down to symbols, in the present state of theology, can only lead to hypocrisy and intolerable violence to conscience. . . .'

"Then in the year 1853 it was declared, at a meeting in Berlin, 'that the Augsburg Confession should be regarded as the standard and expression of a common creed and doctrine.' This was the strongest and greatest effort at effecting a submission to a certain formula which had yet been made. The matter, however, though seriously proposed, was not seriously meant, for even those who were present assenting to such a proposition, were thoroughly well aware that amongst themselves, and in all Germany, there was not a single theologian who did, in point of fact, accept all the articles of the Augsburg Confession. . . .'

"And then, where 'the Union' is most firmly established, the authority of the symbolical books is irremediably ruined. At church assemblies and pastoral meetings it has recently been declared that in Prussia, according to the Tenth Article, a person is free to partake of the Lord's Supper in three different senses: in the Lutheran, or the Calvinistic, or in accordance with the Union signification; and there are others also who maintain that there is nothing to pre-

vent its being taken and understood in a fourth or a fifth sense. . . .” \*

Only a little while ago a synod of all the Presbyterians of the world was called, bearing the name of the Pan-Presbyterian Council. The resolutions of this council as regards articles of faith are evidence of our proposition: “*Resolved*, That this council appoint a committee with instructions to prepare a report to be laid before the next General Council, showing, in point of fact—1. What are the existing creeds and confessions of the churches composing this alliance, and what have been their previous creeds and confessions, with any modifications thereupon, and the dates and occasions of the same, from the Reformation to the present day: 2. What are the existing formulas of subscription, if any, and what have been the previous formulas of subscription used in those churches in connection with their creeds and confessions. 3. How far has individual adherence to those creeds by subscription or otherwise been required from the ministers, elders, or other office-bearers respectively, and also from the private members of the same. And the council authorize the committee to correspond with members of the several churches throughout the world who may be able to give infor-

\* Dr Döllinger's “Church and the Churches,” pp. 280-297

mation ; and they enjoin the committee, in submitting their report, not to accompany it either with any comparative estimate of those creeds or with any critical remarks upon their respective value, expediency, or efficiency.”

The question of the *inspiration* of the Sacred Scriptures being also left to private opinion, we should look for all varieties of judgment as to the meaning and extent of the word. What, according to Protestants, is the sense in which the Bible is said to be inspired by the Holy Ghost ? This is a very important matter, upon which the authority of the written word depends. It is a strange fact that the early Protestant creeds contained no distinct teaching on this subject. They seemed to rest satisfied with the confession that the Holy Spirit was the author of the canonical books, without stating in what sense, nor to what extent the divine power was exercised. Did the Holy Ghost inspire every thought and word ; or was He simply the author of the substance, leaving to the human writer the form of expression ? Or, again, did He only keep the writer from error in faith and morals, having no concern with all else that might be either history or mere opinion ? These questions were never answered, and the minds of the early Protestants wavered between the two extremes. Some went so far as to really



take from Holy Scripture its divine character. Luther and Calvin seem to have inclined to the more strict theory of inspiration, which is well expressed by Hooker. His words are : “ God so employed the Prophets in this heavenly work that they neither spake nor wrote a word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the Spirit put it into their mouths.” \* Others held with confidence that this theory of immediate inspiration could not be justified by the Scriptures themselves, and was open to insuperable difficulties. The followers of Socinus considered inspiration to be nothing more than an intelligent understanding, possessed by virtuous and upright men under the guidance of God, who guarded them against the introduction of errors in matters of grave importance. This is the more general opinion at this day among Protestants who have not renounced altogether the belief in the divine character of the Bible. The theories of Spinoza, Schleiermacher, and Leclerc destroy entirely any proper inspiration of the Scriptures, and subvert the authority of the text. Mr. Jowett, in his essay on the interpretation of Scripture, thus proceeds : “ For any of the higher or supernatural views of inspiration there is no foundation in the Gospels. There is no appear-

\* Hooker, III. 62.

ance that the Evangelists or Apostles had any inward gift, or were subject to any power external to them, different from that of preaching or teaching, which they daily exercised ; nor do they anywhere lead us to suppose that they were free from error or infirmity. . . . The nature of inspiration can only be known from the examination of the Scripture. There is no other source to which we can turn for information ; and we have no right to assume some imaginary doctrine of inspiration like the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church. To the question, What is inspiration ? the first answer therefore is, that idea of Scripture which we gather from the knowledge of it.”\* In the Church of England these views of Mr. Jowett have been declared by the highest tribunal to be consistent with the Anglican formularies. Thus, Dr. Lushington expressed himself as follows : “ As to the liberty of the clergy to examine and determine the text of Scripture, I exceedingly doubt if it can be extended beyond certain verses or parts of the Bible. I think it could not be permitted to a clergyman to reject the whole of one of the books of Scripture.” While there has been and is no unity of opinion among Protestants in regard to the grave question of inspiration, the prevailing sentiment has been mov-

\* Jowett, “ Essays and Reviews,” pp. 345, 347.

ing towards its denial in whole or in part, and the German neology has held sway over the minds of many.

There is neither space nor time now to further examine this subject. It will be admitted that there is no fixed doctrine, and that even among those who call themselves *orthodox*, there are many who really believe no proper theory of inspiration. As this is the vital point for those who profess that the way of salvation is in the reading and study of the sacred word by each individual, the religion of Protestants seems reduced to a very narrow basis, almost to nothingness. They not only do not certainly know what the word of God is, nor how it should be explained; but they do not know how far it is inspired or to what extent it may be trusted. Geologists and men of science attack the Bible, and seemingly prove its inaccuracy and falsehood. They have little to reply, except to curtail their view of its inspiration, and stand by its purely moral teachings. Yet a book untrue in some respects is naturally declared unreliable in all. Dr. Colenso, an English bishop, denies the inspiration and the truth of the whole Pentateuch, and yet remains well recognized in his church. The common attitude of the Protestant mind is to shrink before the infidel and meet him with liberalism. The plan is to ask for the Bible and Christianity as little as pos-

sible; and thus the remnant of dogmatism is soon shattered by the rationalist. Confused and uncertain views are no match for the progress of advanced thought. Modern reasoners deny the Biblical account of the creation, and the unity of the human family, thus destroying the whole economy of grace in the redemption of Jesus Christ, the Son of man as well as the Son of God.

The theory of evolution is also received by many Bible-readers, who strive to reconcile their theory of Holy Scripture with the so-called conclusions of science. The inspired word really gives way, and the dogmas of faith only linger as a sentiment in the heart, not as living principles in the soul. The modern Christian is sure of nothing, neither of the written word nor of its inspiration. Where to him can speak the voice of his Creator and Redeemer?

#### IV.

We will now glance at the progress and result of the system of evangelization by means of the Scriptures alone. According to the Protestant doctrine, the Bible ought to be presented, without note or comment, to every individual, who in his interpretation of it should be influenced by no minister or teacher. This doctrine has not been faithfully car-

ried out; and in many important respects Protestants have contradicted their own principles. They have issued translations notably incorrect; and they have accompanied the distribution of these translations by comments, and generally by the oral instructions of their missionaries. In so doing they have, by their own doctrine, done injustice to the recipients of their Bibles, who should have been left to their own private judgment, uninfluenced by the impressions of others. The heathen have as good a right to their views of the Gospel as the more favored children of Luther and Calvin. Missionaries should only go to those who have not Bibles, and deliver them without words. "They are easy to be understood," and contain the only rule of faith and practice. Nearly all the Protestant denominations are concerned in the diffusion of the Scriptures, though their ministers accompany them with widely differing interpretations. This is very confusing to the heathen, and manifestly unfair. If the teachers do not agree, how can their converts, who are naturally puzzled at the sight of one Bible and numberless systems of belief? Let us, however, look at facts, and see what has been done for the evangelization of the world by the circulation of Protestant Bibles.

Since the Reformation, Bible Societies have been a favorite mode of increasing the printing and diffusion

of the Scriptures. The Canstein Bible Institute, founded in 1712 at Halle, Germany, issued up to 1863 5,273,623 Bibles and 2,630,000 Testaments. Several societies were formed in England and in the United States for the same purpose. The British and Foreign Bible Society, formed in 1804, has issued, up to 1872, 63,299,738 volumes, and has promoted the printing of the Scriptures in two hundred languages. The American Bible Society was formed in New York, May, 1816, and its object is "to encourage a wider circulation of the Bible without note or comment." In fifty-six years its receipts were \$14,980,331 15, and it issued 28,780,969 volumes. The American Bible Union was organized in New York June 10, 1850. Its founders seceded from the other society when that body decided that "it was not its province or duty to revise the English Bible, nor to procure a revision of it from others." It has several times revised the Bible in whole or in part, and has published also translations into foreign languages. It has issued over a million copies since its foundation.\* These societies are still in active operation, printing Bibles with wonderful celerity, and selling them at nominal prices, or sending them gratuitously all over the world. We have before us the yearly report of the British and

\* See "Am. Cyclopædia," II. 616, 617.

Foreign Bible Society for the year 1879-80. Its income for the twelve months was £213,374 14s. 8d. Its payments were £193,539 12s. 7d. Its total issue of Bibles was 2,780,362, and from its organization to date of report it has published 88,168,419 copies.

The American Bible Society, in its report of May 13, 1880, acknowledges receipts for the year of \$608,342 28, and disbursements of \$595,013 81. It has printed or purchased 390,237 Bibles, 759,650 Testaments, and 216,026 parts of the Scriptures. It has a system of colportage for the distribution of its different translations; and has employed one hundred and seventy-seven persons to circulate the Bible in foreign lands. In the United States its agents visited 567,357 families, and found 100,667 without any copy of the Scriptures. The plan of these and kindred societies is to send out their agents, who sell the Bibles if they can find purchasers, and if they cannot induce people to buy them, they give them away. Quite a little revenue is derived from this sale, which helps to support the colporters and the missionaries. It would be difficult to compute the number of Bibles which by means of such agencies have been sent through the world: This circulation of Bibles continues everywhere to be the characteristic feature of Protestant missions.

The first remark we have to make is that the translations used have been often very imperfect, and therefore not proper copies of the inspired text. A moment's reference to well-known authorities will convince any candid mind that the Protestant versions have signally failed in accuracy. According to their doctrine, any grave departure from the original vitiates the whole Bible and deprives the reader of the means of salvation.

The Rev. Dr. Morrison, a missionary to the Chinese, thus speaks: "I edited the New Testament with such *alterations* as in my conscience, and with the degree of knowledge which I then possessed, I thought necessary." \*

This version of Dr. Morrison cost more than twenty thousand pounds, and has since been condemned as being imperfect by the Bible Society itself.

The next version, of Dr. Marshman, was not much better. Malcolm says: "I am assured by missionaries and by Protestant gentlemen that neither Marshman's nor Morrison's Bible is fully intelligible." † It is said that Prof. Kidd invented a new word for *God* "for fear of identifying the doctrine of the Bible with the system of Popery." ‡ The Abbé Voisin,

\* Dr. Morrison's "Memoirs," II. 3.

† "Travels," II. 218.

‡ "Notices of Dr. Morrison's Labors," p. 34.



a Catholic missionary in China, published a French translation, by way of specimen, of a part of the Protestant Chinese version adopted by the Bible Society. He thus writes: "The pen falls from my hand in witnessing the ignoble and sacrilegious manner in which our sacred books are travestied, dishonored, and perverted. I defy the Chinese scholar who possesses the most exact knowledge of his own language so much as to guess what the translator intended to express, nor could I myself have done so if I had not been familiar with the inspired text which he professes to translate."\*

Mr. Taylor Meadows, Chinese interpreter to Her Majesty's Civil Service, in 1856 thus describes the real character of the translations: "Let the English Protestant reflect on the Book of the Mormons, and on Mormonism as it is spreading in Great Britain, and he will obtain by no means an exaggerated notion of the contemptible light in which our *badly-translated Scriptures* and Christianity in China are regarded by the thorough Confucian, as a tissue of absurdities and impious pretensions which it would be lost time to examine."†

The versions circulated in India were no better. "The style of the *Telinga* edition was so obscure and

\* "Annals of the Prop. of the Faith," IX. 109.

† Marshall's "Christian Missions," I. 19.

incoherent that it was almost impossible to comprehend it, and a learned native, after examining it, said he believed it to be a *treatise on magic*.”

“The *Tamul* version,” says a Protestant clergyman, “is really pitiful and deserves only contempt.” \*

Dr. Carey executed or superintended translations of the Scriptures in more than thirty-five languages or dialects, though he did not profess to have any knowledge whatever of more than six of them. “They have not all been tested,” says Dr. Brown, “but those which have been, are so imperfect that they are now generally given up as of no great value.” †

The Abbé Goust writes that “owing to their monstrous errors and barbarous style, our sacred writings are thought to be the *work of a madman*. The pagans no sooner read two or three pages than they tear up the book or fling it away with contempt.” ‡

In Ceylon the version of the Bible translated by the Church of England missionaries at Cotta, according to Sir Emerson Tennent, “was described even by their own nominal converts as *blasphemous*.” §

“Two versions of the Scriptures,” writes Lord

\* “Annals,” III. 20.

† Dr. Brown, “History,” II. 71.

‡ “Annals of the Prop. of the Faith,” I. 500.

§ “Christianity in Ceylon,” VI. 268.

Torrington, "are in existence, both provided by the funds of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the one by the Church of England, and the other by the Wesleyan missionaries ; but though their respective presses are within six months of each other, their versions are so different, and both of them apparently so unsatisfactory, that a youth who has been trained in the one cannot accommodate himself to the other, and a native, though very imperfectly acquainted with our language, finds that he understands the Bible better in English than in either." \*

In New Zealand a Protestant writer tells us : "The attempt to turn a jargon like the Maori into a pure language is a decided failure, and the words they have had to coin are ludicrous examples of language-making ; very few Maoris understand it." †

Precisely the same has been said by the missionaries to the Sandwich Islands : "It might have been better that their language had never been reduced to rules and writing, for very few books could be published in it." "Of the too celebrated Surinam Negro-English version, of which even the Bible Societies appear to have been ashamed, we need not give any description. There are some forms of irreverence with which, except under the pressure of extreme ne-

\* Barrow, VI. 165.

† Marshall, I. 31.

cessity, one may reasonably decline to make acquaintance. Even a Presbyterian writer, not easily offended by anything proceeding from such a source, complains of it as ‘most ludicrous, and altogether inconsistent with that decorous and seemly garb in which the word of God should be presented to the public.’ ” \*

Mr. Jowett, in his report to the Malta Bible Society, says that “the Bishop of Scio, a truly learned man, regrets in behalf of his own nation the *vulgarity* of that version which has been printed for the Greeks.” †

It would be easy to multiply testimonies as to the inaccuracy of many of the Protestant translations. It really comes to this: that where the Bible Societies have been circulating editions with important errors, they have been distributing something else in place of the inspired word. In this connection we may add that even their own missionaries bear witness to the correctness of the Catholic versions, against which no accusations have been made. Dr. Wolff, one of their agents, admits that “the best translations of foreign Bibles issued by our Bible Society are reprints from those made by the Propaganda at Rome.” ‡

\* Marshall, I. 36.

† “Asiatic Journal, VI. 503.”

‡ Wolff, “Travels,” p 182.

In 1818 the British and Foreign Society purchased 1,500 copies of the ancient Armenian Testament from the Armenian Catholic College on the Island of St. Lazarus, Venice, and subsequently procured a larger number for distribution in Turkey. The Arabic version which the society formerly circulated in Syria was the Propaganda edition printed at Rome in 1671. The Ethiopic and Tartar versions were published long before Protestant missions began.\* In the Chinese translation Mr. Medhurst admits that the Church anticipated the sects by more than two centuries. The same is true of the Cingalese, the Persian, the Russian, the Polish, and all European dialects, as well as of the Coptic, Tamul, Annamite, Malayalim, and many other Oriental versions.†

The Protestant ministers have generally availed themselves of the labors of the Catholic missionaries ; and some are sufficiently honest to acknowledge the superiority of their translations. This leaves them the more without excuse for any perversions or mistranslations of the inspired text.

We now ask, What has been the result of all this enormous distribution of Bibles throughout the world ? How has this system of evangelization succeeded ? What have the heathen done with the Scriptures so

\* Neander, VII. 76.

† Marshall, " Christian Missions," I. 52, 53.

prodigally thrown among them? How many have been converted to Christianity by this method? We shall endeavor to present briefly the statements and confessions of Protestants themselves, who certainly are fair witnesses. The able work of Dr. Marshall on Christian missions furnishes us with abundant evidence that the propagandism by the Bible Societies has been a failure, and that the Scriptures have been in most cases literally and morally thrown away.

Archdeacon Grant says: "The eagerness of the heathen to obtain the sacred volume cannot be traced to a thirst for the word of life, but to the *secular* purposes, the *unhallowed* uses, to which the Holy Bible, left in their hands, has been turned, which are absolutely shocking to any Christian feeling." \*

"They have been seen," says Dr. Williams, "on the counters of shops in Macao, cut in two for wrapping up medicines and fruits, which the shopman would not do with the worst of his own books." †

"The number of books which Protestants distribute is immense," says Bishop Courvezzy, a prelate well known to English travellers in the Indian archipelago, "but the use to which they are applied is very different from that which they were intended to

\* "Bampton Lectures," p. 93.

† "The Middle Kingdom," II. 334.

serve. At Singapore I saw the walls of two houses entirely covered over with leaves of the Bible; this profanation, however, is not greater than when they are employed to roll around tobacco and bacon." \*

"You make *one* convert annually out of fifty thousand," said an educated Hindoo to Mr. Lang, "and that one an impostor. This is the result of preaching in the open air all through the country, and the distribution of hundreds of thousands of books in the Hindostanee and Bengalee languages." †

"At the capitals," says Captain J. B. Seely, "I have seen a number of translations in the various Oriental languages; but in the provinces and towns I never, by application and enquiry, could hear of a copy of the Scriptures in the *possession of a native*."

"I have seen a Hindoo devoutly listen to a discourse, beg a tract, and, on his return to the village, leave it on the threshold of the temple, and fall down with his forehead on the floor and worship the image of Ganesa." ‡

"The mere distribution of Bibles," says Dr. Middleton, the first Protestant bishop in India, "will produce very little effect in promoting Christianity among the natives." §

\* "Annals," I. 107.

† Lang's "Travels in India," p. 233.

‡ "The Wonders of Elora," Seely, pp. 475, 524.

§ Middleton's "Life," I. p. 377.

“The Bible is read,” says the Rev. W. Tracy, “not because it has any attractions in itself, but because its perusal is the only condition of admission to the school, and ultimately to the *golden harvest* beyond. Its instructions are received listlessly, and speedily forgotten.” \*

An Anglican missionary in Ceylon relates: “The people came around me in great numbers and held out their hands for the tracts. We distributed not less than three thousand. Some of these books were torn to pieces before our eyes, others were stuck upon the branches of trees. Some, more impudent than the rest, as soon as they had received them exclaimed: ‘These are fine things for wadding for our guns when we go into the jungles to shoot.’ ” †

In Africa the children of the negroes make kites of the leaves of the Bible, and the mission church in the Gaboon district in 1845 had only attracted *eight* natives.

Mr. Duncan observes that “a partial education, by merely reading the Scriptures, is only the means of making the natives more perfect in villany.” ‡

Mr. Mansfield Parkyns tells of missionaries in

\* “S. India Miss. Conference,” 174.

† “Recollections of Ceylon,” Rev. J. Selkirk, p. 419.

‡ “Travels in West Africa,” p. 303.



Abyssinia who sit under a tent and distribute Bibles indiscriminately to all who happen from curiosity to come in. Speaking of the kingdom of Tigrè, he says: "Of what use can Bibles be in Abyssinia? First, who can read? And then comes the usual fact: the use to which the many Bibles given away in this country are commonly applied, is the wrapping up of snuff and such like undignified purposes." \*

Admiral Slade writes: "I have been a good deal among the Greeks, and often at Smyrna, but I have never seen any one of them reading the Bible, nor, do I believe, has any Englishman there." †

"Bibles are given to the Turks, printed very rationally in the Turkish character, but one hundred and ninety-nine out of two hundred cannot read."

"The Hebrews take the Bible with great pleasure, and, carefully destroying the New Testament, place the Old in their synagogues, sneering at the donors."

"The Albanians make wadding for their guns of the leaves of the Society's Bibles." ‡

In Russia "missionaries may introduce Bibles in any quantity, but let them only venture to attempt to

\* "Life in Abyssinia," pp. 153-155.

† "Records of Travel," II. p. 476.

‡ Admiral Slade, "Travels in Turkey," p. 518.

convert, not a member of the Russian Church, but a heathen or idolater, to any form of worship but its own, and Siberia stares them in the face." \*

Italy, and especially Piedmont, have lately excited the hopes of English Protestants. "I pass every day," says the *Times's* correspondent, "a little book-stall under the Turin porticoes in the Via di Po; its shelves are groaning under the weight of Bibles, but the old woman who offers them for sale has a perfect sinecure of it."

In Germany, where millions of Bibles have been distributed, "there is no book," says Tholuck, "less studied than the Bible."

In Switzerland "of every ten householders there is scarcely to be met one who now believes in God and Christ, or makes any use of the Scriptures." †

Immense numbers of the Bible have been circulated among the Indian tribes of North America, with hardly any result.

Thousands have been sent to South America and to Mexico with the purpose of converting Catholics. Dr. Olin, President of the Wesleyan College, honestly records of one of these operations "that it was an unsuccessful attempt to make some impression upon the native population, which ought to inspire

\* "Recollections of Russia," p. 23.

† Marshall, I. 42.

the Board with great caution in entertaining new projects for missions among Catholics.”

“Such,” says Dr. Marshall, “by the testimony of their own agents, have been the unvarying results, without so much as a solitary exception, at any time or in any part of the world, of that almost incredible dispersion of Bibles which the societies have poured out. Employed in all lands for the vilest purposes, despised by the more enlightened heathen for their vulgarity and incoherence, cast into the sea by Mahometans, not a trace remains, after a brief space, of the millions of books with which vague religious sentiment has inundated the world.” \*

The accounts of the Bible Societies themselves give very little encouragement. While they tell us how many Bibles they have given away or sold, they have very few conversions to report to even their idea of Christianity.

Dr. Bliss’s account of the Bible work in the Levant agency of the American Bible Society has these discouraging remarks : “Scoffers have increased in numbers and boldness. Men who still are called, and call themselves, Christians, say sneeringly, ‘We know all about the Bible. It is a book of the past ; it is all nonsense.’ On account of this epidemic of atheism the

\* Marshall, “Christian Missions,” I. 51.

colporters have met with peculiar difficulties in their work. Time and again have they appeared at the Bible-house with woe-begone countenances and intense discouragement. Several new men have undertaken colportage, but have given it up on account of the difficulties. Two earnest men from the interior worked hard, on trial, for thirty days; one sold only seven, the other ten copies, and, becoming disheartened, sought other employment. Kriker, from Mesopotamia, sold in two months sixty-six books, and then gave up the work as too trying to body and mind. A Jew sold nineteen books, and returned the rest of his stock to the depot." \*

The Rev. A. W. Clark, of Prague, writes: "In Post Street I met an avowed enemy of God's word. He asked me in almost diabolical tones: 'Are you not ashamed of yourself to go about in these times with holy books—stupid nonsense?' He then screamed at me: 'You good-for-nothing fellow, you deceiver, you liar!'

"An inn-keeper ridiculed the Bible, and remarked: 'A glass of beer is my god.' A servant to whom I offered a Testament replied: 'Such a book is mere trash and good for nothing.'"

Mr. Blackford writes from Brazil: "The above is

\* "Report American Bible Society, 1880," p. 101.

an outline of the colporter work done during the year. I am sorry the results are still so far out of proportion with what the outlay ought seemingly to produce."

Rev. H. P. Hamilton reports from Mexico that "we have frequent calls from people who, although they do not care to buy, desire to look at our Bibles, and ask about the amount of distribution."

"In Uruguay and the Argentine Republic nearly one hundred thousand copies of the Scriptures have been circulated, though opposition, and cavils, and jeers have been encountered."

"The district of which Tripoli is the centre has ever been a hard field for Bible work. The readers are few in the smaller towns, and the colporters find it impossible to sell their wares, and are compelled often to be content with reading the word to those whom they find gathered in coffee-shops and other places of resort."

"The Ansairizieh have no fondness for the Scriptures, and few of them know how to read. The colporter, after toiling for a week or two in a mountain village, could not report the sale of a single copy."

Rev. Mr. Hastings writes from Ceylon: "It is a day of small things with us. Within the last year two or three tracts have been published against Chris-

tianity, one of which attempts to show from the Bible itself that it teaches and encourages the grossest immoralities."

Rev. C. R. Mills reports progress from China in these words: "On these tours we rather avoided the large towns. Our little donkey carried beds and clothing for two of us, besides books. I know, therefore, that the books distributed this year are not tumbled down in a heap somewhere, but are actually scattered in six hundred villages. This work is, of course, only *seed-sowing*. But we believe the seed is actually sown, not *dumped by the wayside*."

"The Chinese," says Dr. Farnham, "are *not* stretching out their hands for the Gospel."\*

These extracts show that, with all the immense outlay of money and labor, very little is accomplished. The missionaries are all talking of the *seed-time*, but very few reap any fruit; and the accounts given of conversions are not only scarce but very unsatisfactory.

The reports of the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society are likewise very discouraging. We will give only a few citations:

"Formerly," says an experienced colporteur in France, "I used to have frequent discussions about

\* "Report American Bible Society, 1880."

the Bible, and sold a copy now and then ; but now they do not even take the trouble to say ‘ no.’ When I offer the Bible, they only turn their backs with contempt.”

“ In Belgium the result of our labors is not always visible to human observation. The good seed remains *under ground* until the spring-time.” “ In one poor little village we sold pretty well, till one of the villagers showed his book to the curé. Immediately we had the whole village after us, wanting us to take back our books, and we had to hasten away with all speed.” The same thing occurred in the country on the banks of the Meuse, and Rev. M. de Faye laments that he has been able to effect so little during the past year.

In Austria the agent reports a falling-off in his work. “ It is less than he had hoped for, less than the total of the last year by some thousands.”

“ Often our colporters come into houses where we find Bibles bought some years ago ; some are lying on the shelf covered with dust.”

“ Not much has been accomplished in Servia this year. There is little opposition, but much indifference.”

In Hungary “ there is a diminution of seven thousand copies from the number issued in 1878. The judgments of God are abroad, and many are they

whose hearts are hardened. But your agent is able to discover symptoms which justify a better hope." "The colporters are said to have done what they could."

In Poland "there is a considerable falling-off from the last and former years."

There is the same discouragement in Roumania, "where there was much hard and disappointing work, and where infidelity and ungodliness prevail."

In Italy "our information leads to the same disappointing conclusion. With rare exceptions the rich, and the noble, and the educated refuse to lament to our mourning, or to dance to our piping. Godly sorrow and Gospel joy alike leave them unmoved. Even the colporters think it quite a wonder if they sell a Bible to a Roman."

"In the district round Ancona there are only gleams of light. An evangelist had settled at Rimini, but made little impression, and has gone elsewhere. Incredulity is great and is extending."

In Spain "there is no perceptible advance. The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests bear rule through their means, and the people love to have it so. This year two or three so-called Protestant pastors have betrayed the cause of truth and righteousness. 'To-day' is the Gospel challenge to Spain, and with almost incurable levity she answers, 'To-



morrow.' The name of Protestantism is hateful to the Spaniards, and the results fall far below the hopes of the laborers."

"In Cadiz our colporter, Hernandez, was accused of grave and shameful sins by a Protestant pastor. After some time the matter was brought before the Presbytery, and investigated for six hours. The result was that the colporter vindicated his character, and the pastor himself was convicted of practices which have caused his suspension for twelve months."

"The extracts from Mr. Stewart's report from Portugal give the lights and shades which brighten or chill his work. The spiritual result is known completely only to Him who sees in secret."

In Norway and Sweden "there is a considerable falling-off of thousands of copies," and the same is reported of Russia and its provinces. "She is now passing," says the report, "through much tribulation; may she thereby enter more fully into the kingdom of God."

"There is no real liberty of conscience in Persia. Under this evil system the land is made empty and waste; its joy is darkened and its mirth is gone. Enquiry repressed becomes unbelief concealed, and a new evil grows out of the old."

"In Crete the bishops and clergy are ruled by the Patriarch, and they follow his example in a course

of opposition which the agent characterizes in the strongest terms, involving both the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of Greece in the severest condemnation. The number able to read he sets down as not more than two per cent."

"There is no awakening on the part of the Greek Church. Prelates and priests go on in a dull round of empty ceremonies, indifferent to the signs of the times, and hostile to the circulation of the Scriptures."

In Syria the colporter relates that "on coming to a Maronite village the people would neither sell him bread nor give him lodging, so that he was obliged to go to another village, where a Moslem sheltered him."

"At Acre a careless fellow, who said he wished to buy a Bible in order to scatter its leaves along the street, was summoned by the Greek bishop, and severely reprimanded for such profanity."

"Romish missions largely equipped are pushing to the very heart of Africa, and disputing with Protestants the possession of the field. Contrast, if not conflict, there must needs be."

From Madagascar a missionary writes: "I must confess that another year's experience in the two large districts under my charge, with constant and intimate intercourse with the people, has added to

my conviction that a considerable portion of our church-members, even of some years' standing, have not *yet reached to the soul and kernel* of Christianity. Attendance at the Sunday services, especially at the monthly Sacrament, and the occasional use of Scriptural words and phrases, the meaning of which, for the most part, they do not comprehend, are the religious husks with which too many rest content."

In India "the native mind is like some vast morass. It cannot bear the weight of the solid truths which Christianity rests upon. It absorbs the teaching given to it. Lesson after lesson sinks and disappears in this great *intellectual sponge*." "A conference is to be called at Calcutta to secure unanimity in the selection of *terms* with which to set forth the *name of the Divine Being* in the Santali Scripture."

"The heart of China is hidden from us, but beneath her placid face there are feelings at work, of which we see the signs at the *extremities* of her vast diameter." "A few years ago the Scriptures were all given to the Chinese without any charge. Such a rule being established, they are the last people to wish for a change. Nay, they have thought there must be some mistake on our part in wishing them to purchase, even at a low price, seeing that your

great wealth was as great as ever. So late as three years ago the income from sales did not amount to *two dollars*. The present statistics show the amount to have gone up to *seventy-six dollars*."

"A Japanese heard for the first time of God's mercifulness, and bought the Bible, and promised to believe in Christ. Afterward he tried to persuade his wife to Christ, but she would not, and at last they were about to quarrel, when I calmed them, telling him it is not good to lead a person to God so *shortly*, but persuade her by degrees." "May God in His mercy make *this little one* a thousand."

The final section of the report says that "the colporters have sowed by the *waters of bitterness*. In Holland an unbelieving rationalism, with the law at its back, thrusts the Bible out of the schools; and that, too, in the land which gave nurture to Erasmus. In Belgium a godless free-thought refuses to distinguish between the claims of Heaven and those of men, and is alike indifferent to Christ and Anti-christ." \*

These extracts are well worth consideration, inasmuch as they confess the practical failure of the system of evangelism by means of Bible distribu-

\* "Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1880."

tion. The Bibles are not circulated without comment, but in most cases are accompanied by the oral explanations of teachers who labor only to disseminate their own views. Yet conversions to any lasting species of Christianity are so few, that any candid mind may well ask if all this vast outlay of money be not a foolish waste, and a sad deception of the zealous Protestant. The heathen with their Bibles are in many cases worse than when they had not seen them, more perplexed as to truth, and more immoral. Protestantism has a negative power to break down a system of belief, but no positive strength to build and sustain a creed. This has been demonstrated not only among natives of foreign lands, but here at home, where Bibles are abundant on every side. The various sects are practically without creeds to bind their members. And what is Christianity without a certain creed? The most radical opinions were received with applause in the late Pan-Presbyterian Council, the most conservative of Protestant bodies. We copy the following from a daily journal:

“Professor Flint seemed to intimate that it was quite possible that the future of theology might modify, or at least clarify, these troublous dogmas. Such an assertion, coming from so eminent an authority, was what troubled the strict constructionists and gave comfort to the liberals. It certainly revealed

the fact that there are still some points in that pillar of faith, the Westminster Catechism, that some of the clergy are not at all clear about. Professor Flint, while claiming that it tended to the spread of agnosticism to deny the possibility of any further light, or that investigation in theology can go no further; by inference at least opened the way for permitting the doubting Presbyterian to remain inside the fold. The Rev. Principal Grant hurled back the accusation that Dr. Flint had sneered. 'I detected no sneer, sir, in Professor Flint's address. He is not the man to sneer. He has the courage of his opinions, and he will say boldly what he believes without any sneering. What he meant to convey was, that if we try to reach doubt by church discipline, instead of by an effort for broader, clearer thought and a deeper search into the truths of theology—if thus we try to reach, doubtless we shall lead the way to agnosticism.' Here there was applause, and none applauded louder than did many of the Scotch delegates. Principal Grant then made a bold assault. Think of the advance of liberalism when a Scotch Canadian Presbyterian faces the leaders of this church from all over the world and says these words: 'We do err if we say the Westminster Catechism is beyond the region of enquiry. Creeds grow, and how can there be growth unless there is liberty of thought.' "

The New York *Independent* thus remarks upon Dr. Skinner's speech at the same assembly :

“ ‘The American Church,’ he declared, ‘is a unit on inspiration, on the Adamic covenant, and on the nature of the atonement.’ We grieve to say that Dr. Skinner said what he knew is not true.

“He proceeds throughout his whole speech to show that also on the burning question of inspiration the Presbyterian Church does and must hold unitedly to entire inspiration of all the sixty-six books of the Bible, and that in argument with unbelievers, as well as in teaching its own members. The passage above quoted we had in view. It states what is untrue. On these subjects the church is not a unit. It does not hold, even by a large majority, with Dr. Skinner. It does not discuss them, however, because it has learned to tolerate differences, not because there are no differences.”

The *Independent* is certainly correct. Protestants do not agree in regard to the inspiration of the Bible, in which they trust as their rule of faith. This is the plain result of many years of Bible reading. In this great country, more than among the heathen, we behold the effects of the system of Bible evangelism. Infidelity of the boldest kind stares us in the face, and the children of the Reformation have no answer to make, because they have no certain ground on

which to stand. Where there is no fixed, unalterable faith there is no armor for defence or attack.

The following language of the *New York Sun*, October 30, 1880, is a fit conclusion of our argument from the testimony of non-Catholics :

“The modern assault on Christianity is directed against its foundations. The infidelity of this time denies the supernatural origin of Christianity. It even goes further and denies the supernatural altogether, or rejects it as something not within the power of man to discuss with intelligence. Appeals to Biblical authority are therefore of no avail against it ; for what is the Bible to these modern infidels except an ancient record, an ancient anthology, a collection of legendary tales, or the history of an outcast and bigoted people, to which is added a more or less spurious account of the career of a revolutionary religious enthusiast ?

“The Bible is no more to them than the Koran or the mystical writings of pagan India. They count it as the product of intellectual childhood, and deem it an impertinence to ask men of developed minds to base their reasoning on it as the book of inspiration. With them inspiration and superstition are about the same thing. They would no more think of looking on the Bible as an infallible guide, as the final repository of human knowledge concerning infinite and



occult things, and as the full revelation of the Divine Mind and Heart, than they would think of building another Pyramid of Cheops as an astronomical observatory ; for that is what Mr. Proctor says it was put up for. They say they are not children to be held captive by fairy tales, or savages to be frightened by hobgoblins.

“When the ministry understand—and some of them seem now to be beginning to understand it—that even where modern infidelity has not got to this extreme, it is all inevitably tending to that end, they will be better prepared to meet the enemy. We have in the advance the philosophers who treat the mind and soul as only a product of the brain and nervous system—as something no more immortal than the rest of us. We have the school who would trace man up from inanimate matter through the lowest scale of animal existence. We have the philosophers who discuss the origin and development of religion as they would a case of insanity. They make men the manufacturers of their own gods—the worshippers of qualities in themselves which they have magnified into attributes of deity, constructing the god to fit the mould the limits of their imaginations have made. As to a man, he is a creature whose characteristics are determined by his inheritance of qualities acted on by his surroundings.

“Far behind these philosophers, but really on the same road, are the doubters of inspiration ; the men who reject church dogmas ; those who turn away with repugnance from the idea of hell, whether it can be proved out of the Bible or not ; those who deny the efficacy of prayer ; the agnostics, the Know-Nothings of religion ; and the people who are unable to say whether they believe in religion or not. Of such as these the churches themselves are full, and the logical result of their doubts is the denial of an authoritative supernatural religion.

“If they are not converted to faith, they are liable to become infidels of the stalwart variety. They will get further away from Christianity the longer they reason about it. They give up parts of the Bible and parts of the creed, become critics instead of devout believers, and then the whole Bible and the whole creed go. Hell passes away for them, and then heaven is dissolved, and finally they look into the future and see no immortality. That is the logical progress of modern infidelity, and many thousands of men and women, here and in Europe, have either taken the steps or are entering upon the road.”

With these words we close our brief view of the Holy Scriptures in the hands of Protestants. Every pretension of the Reformers is as false as the principles they enunciated. There is no ground of truth

on which they may stand ; and the inspired word of God, taken from its legitimate place and made the text-book of party strife, loses all its divine character and sinks to the level of the human mind. One by one the articles of Christian faith disappear, and the Bible itself is at last rejected, where the swelling waves of a broad atheism threaten to engulf all things sacred.

There is no safety but in a return to that one and unchangeable Church which is “the pillar and ground of revealed truth,” which preserves and expounds the written word, while it ever speaks to all the ages the manifold wisdom of God. In her alone can the truth be found. By her alone can the faith of Jesus Christ be taught. To her portals let the true and sincere hasten, for the eternal light dwells upon her towers, and she is “the city of the Lord, the Sion of the Holy One of Israel.”



## LECTURE FOURTH.

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*THE BIBLE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.*



## LECTURE FOURTH.

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### *THE BIBLE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.*

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“All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work.”—2 ST. TIMOTHY iii. 16, 17.

WE have seen the inspired Scriptures in the hands of men, taken from their proper place, and robbed of their dignity and divine character. We will now behold them in the hands to which the Holy Ghost entrusted them, where alone they are safe from the attacks of unbelief, where alone they can speak the message of their Divine Author. We shall see the place which they hold in the Catholic Church, which received them from God, which has carefully preserved them, and testifies to their authority and inspiration. The brief view to be presented in this lecture will close our argument, and demonstrate that Protestantism, with all its professions, has betrayed and ruined the Bible ; while our holy religion stands unchanged in its accord with written and oral tradi-

tion, and is therefore the faith once delivered to the saints. While, according to the principles of the Reformation, the Sacred Scriptures cannot logically be supported ; while facts of history testify to the just conclusions of reason ; “ the pillar and ground of the truth ” remains unmoved, and on this foundation the inspired writings fulfil their mission, display the wonders of the economy of grace, and draw faithful hearts to the deeper knowledge and love of God, our Redeemer. In the Catholic Church they rest securely where no one can deny their divine authority or call in question their inspiration. Here, where faith is fixed and unchangeable, the voice of God speaks, and no one can gainsay His will. Here they are the treasures of devout science, the fountains of faith, hope, and love, the response which the written word makes to the living oracles of faith. Here they live in their true life and bring forth fruit unto holiness, while through them the Holy Spirit acts upon faithful hearts.

The purpose of this lecture leads us, then, to consider, first, the authority on which the Holy Scriptures rest ; secondly, the testimony of the Church in regard to the canon ; thirdly, the Catholic doctrine in regard to the inspiration of the sacred books ; and, lastly, the proper use of the Bible in accordance with faith and piety.



## I.

The Holy Scriptures rest entirely upon the authority of the Church, which, in its infallible teaching, commends them to us as from God.

As we have seen in our criticism upon the Protestant doctrine, two things are necessary for the vindication of the sacred character of the canonical books: the proof of their authenticity, and the certainty of their inspiration. Upon the first of these requisitions human aid may be available, and learning may be of use. For the difficult questions which at once present themselves no man is fully competent, and the testimony of others must be relied upon. But authenticity does by no means establish the canonicity of a book nor admit it into the roll of writings indited by the Spirit of God. The inspiration of the author needs to be confirmed by an unerring testimony, and therefore by God Himself. He must speak and testify to the books which bear the marks of His hand; and there is no divine external testimony but that of the Catholic Church. She is the living organ of Christ on earth, the only organ authorized to speak for Him. "He that heareth you heareth Me." \* "If any man will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." † An external witness

\* St. Luke x. 16.

† St. Matthew xxiii. 17.

is absolutely necessary ; and if the Church be not accepted, there is no possible evidence of the divinity of the Bible. “I, for my part,” says St. Augustine, “would not believe the Gospel, unless the authority of the Catholic Church moved me to it.” \* These words of the great Christian Father not only express the ground of his own belief, but enunciate a principle of universal application. The Scriptures cannot establish themselves, since they themselves are in question ; and by such an argument the simplest rules of logic would be violated. Besides the infallible teaching of the Church, there are only two ways in which the testimony of Christ and His apostles can be made known to us—namely, by the Scriptures alone, or by mere human tradition. The witness of the Scriptures cannot be taken, for the reason just given, that *their* authority is in question. And if it were admitted that one part of the inspired word were divine, the proof of that portion would need to be first rigidly established. Then the passages of the New Testament which refer to the Old only refer to single quotations, and do not by any means cover the whole canon, much less decide the value of disputed books. The text from St. Paul’s Epistle to St. Timothy, in which he declares all inspired Scripture to be from God, does

\* St. Augustine, T. VIII. contra Ep. Manichæi.

not intimate to which of the sacred writings he applies this tribute. It does not assert his own epistles to be inspired, much less refer to books not then in existence. Hence it is evident that no proof of weight can be gathered here. The inspiration of many books of the Old Testament, of the Gospels of SS. Mark and Luke, of the Acts of the Apostles, of the Epistles not written, of the Apocalypse, cannot be demonstrated by any sufficient testimony of the Scriptures.

Tradition, taken as a merely human and historical argument, is also entirely insufficient to establish the inspiration of each and all of the sacred books; in truth, it will not suffice for those which Protestants have consented to retain. An absolute certitude is here required, since it is a question of faith, and for them the great and only question. For, that tradition, in this critical and human respect, should furnish any reasonable ground of certitude, it is necessary that it should be unanimous, so that there should have been at no time a dissension of any moment, any variety of opinions, or any denial of any portion of the received canon. History testifies that there has not been such unanimity, that the Jews themselves did not agree as to all the books of the Old Testament, and that until the action of the Church there was question among the Christian Fathers as to the

canonicity of even some of the books of the New Testament. Then, to those who deny the authority of the Church, history is only the record of *human* acts, and the heretical sects are to be accepted with their traditions. Many such Christian sects denied one or other of the inspired writings. The Manichæans rejected the books of Moses as indited by the spirit of evil. The Gnostics refused to believe in the divine character of the Psalms. The Ebionites had their own Gospel in place of that of St. Matthew. The Marcionites received only a mutilated version of St. Luke, and rejected many of St. Paul's epistles. By others the Gospel of St. John was condemned as the work of heretics. There were also books claiming to be inspired, spurious Gospels and Epistles, which were accepted by many. As we have seen, the original Protestants were not united as to the canon of Holy Scripture, so that nowhere and at no time does mere human tradition furnish any certain rule by which to distinguish the true from the false Scriptures.

In addition to this, it may be said that Protestants have explicitly denied the authority of tradition, and can therefore never rely upon it to establish any point of faith.

The testimony which can establish the inspiration of any book of Scripture must be an external one which cannot deceive. A subjective proof which

varies with each individual can never be made the foundation of a revelation. This divine ~~fact~~ cannot be demonstrated from the sublimity or divinity of the text, nor from the internal relish of its teachings, nor from the private revelation of the Holy Ghost made to each one.

Admitting the high character of the truths and arguments of the Bible, we only show that the sacred books contain things supernatural and sublime, or that the writers were men of holiness and noble sentiments ; we do not thereby prove that God was the author of the books themselves. Nothing more can be strictly deduced from this argument.

Protestants generally admit the weakness of the evidence drawn from the internal relish of the Scriptures. This relish is not universal, neither does it apply to all the parts of the inspired word. It depends entirely upon the condition and disposition of the reader, who is not in the same mood at all times. Thus Michaelis writes : “ An interior sensation of the effects of the Holy Spirit, and a conviction of the usefulness of these writings to sanctify and purify the heart, are very unreliable proofs. As to this interior sensation, I frankly admit that I have never felt it ; and those who experience it are no more worthy of envy nor nearer the truth, since even Mahometans feel it in the reading of their books. Pious senti-

ments can be excited easily by the writings of philosophers, by works purely human, or even by doctrines founded upon error." \* There are writings counted inspired by Protestants which do not produce this relish, even to the degree that may be experienced from some uninspired books.

As for the doctrine of a private revelation to each individual, taught by some of the Calvinists, and embodied in their confessions of faith, it is wholly without foundation. It is more difficult of proof than the truth it seeks to demonstrate. Where is the evidence of such a revelation which shall make known to each one in his turn which are the books written by the influence of the Holy Spirit? While there is no possible proof except the assertion of the individual, such a doctrine makes the Holy Ghost contradict Himself. There is only one faith, as there can be but one God, and faith cannot be anything private or personal to be formed in individual minds by study; but it is of necessity public and objective, and to it as externally manifested the faithful must submit their intellects and hearts. The Divine Revealer is the author of nature; He cannot contradict, in the economy of salvation, the attributes of His being nor the work of His hands. Moreover, if the Holy Spirit

\* Michaelis, "Int.," III. § 3.

be the author of such private revelations to single believers, He is the author of strange and contrary doctrines, which everywhere divide the followers of the Reformation. He is responsible for the illusions of the Anabaptists, the fearful propositions of Calvin, the extravagances of George Fox, or the ravings of Swedenborg. All these, manifestly coming from the interpretation of a private spirit, confute each other, and by their contradictions show that they are not of God.

It remains, therefore, that the simple truth be stated. The Catholic Church, by authority which she possesses from God to speak His word, is the only witness as to the inspiration or canonicity of the sacred books. If she were not on earth fulfilling her mission, there would be no possible way of knowing the Scriptures or recognizing their divinity. They who reject her are absolutely without certitude upon this great and important question. She speaks by the Vicar of Christ, her infallible head, and by œcumenical councils in union with him. There can be no doubt as to her voice nor as to the authority which she claims among men.

The Redeemer and the Revealer, whose mystical body she is, speaks in and through her. Her divine mission is established by the miracles and prophecies which support the fabric of Christianity; and the

whole revelation of Christ stands or falls with her. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, *teach* all nations, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." \* "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." † Such has been the constant belief of all Christians from the time of Christ to the period of the so-called Reformation. The authority of the Church was never disputed, except by heretics, who, by their denial of the verities of faith, were placed beyond the pale of Christianity. "We are of God," says St. John. "He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. By *this* we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." ‡

"Where the Church is," says St. Irenæus, "there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every grace; but the Spirit is truth." §

"We are not, therefore," says Origen, "to give heed to those who say, 'Behold, here is Christ,' but show Him not in the Church, which is filled with brightness from the east even to the west, which is filled with true light, is the pillar and ground of

\* St. Matthew xxviii. 18-20.

† St. Matt. xvi. 18.

‡ 1 St. John iv. 6.

§ St. Irenæus, "Adv. Hæres.," III. c. 24.



truth, on which, as a whole, is the whole advent of the Son of man.” \*

In like manner are the words of St. Cyprian: “Whosoever he be, and whatsoever he be, he is no Christian who is not in Christ’s Church. We ought not to be curious as to what he teaches, since he teaches without the Church.” †

“The Catholic Church,” says Lactantius, “is the only one that retains the true worship. This is the source of truth; this is the dwelling-place of faith; this the temple of God which whosoever enters not, or from which whosoever departs, is an alien from the hope of life and eternal salvation.” ‡

The Christian Fathers, all without exception, rely upon the judgment of the Catholic Church for the absolute certitude of the divinity of the different books of Holy Scripture, and make appeal to no other authority. Thus the Council of Toledo, in the year 400, defines its faith: “If any one shall say or believe that other Scriptures besides those which the Catholic Church has received are to be esteemed of authority, or to be venerated, let him be anathema.” §

“Learn also diligently, and *from the Church*,”

\* Origen, “Comment. in Matt.,” I. 30.

† St. Cyprian, Ep. III., ad Antonianum.

‡ Lactantius, “Divin. Inst.,” IV. c. 30.

§ See “Int. in Script. Sac.,” Rev. Dr. Ubaldi.

says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, “ which are the books of the Old Testament, and which of the New, and read not to me anything of the uncertain books. Those only meditate on earnestly which we read confidently in the Church. Far wiser than thou, and more devout, were the apostles and ancient bishops, the rulers of the Church, who have handed these down. Thou, therefore, who art a child of the Church, do not falsify what has been settled ; but take and hold as a learner, and in profession, that faith only which is now delivered to thee by the Church.” \*

Catholics of the present day are in precisely the same position as those of the early ages. The conditions of faith have never changed ; the office of the Church has never ceased. Upon her infallible authority alone we rest, and from her hands we have received the inspired word of God, which we know, by her unerring voice, to be the work of the Holy Spirit. Guided by the same divine influence which illumined the sacred writers, she gives to us the books and parts of books which are divine, and settles the canon of Holy Scripture in its entirety.

## II.

The testimony of the Catholic Church in regard to the canon of Scripture.

\* St. Cyril. Jeru., Catech., IV. v.

Under this division of our lecture we propose to give briefly the history of the canon in the Church, and her final action concerning it. The sacred books were always in the highest veneration among Christians, and were received as inspired by the individual churches which possessed them. Through times of persecution and the pressure of gentile fury they were carefully preserved, and their holy teachings made known to the converts who embraced the faith. But there were spurious Gospels and books of doubtful authority, in regard to which great caution was necessary.

Concerning the canon of the Old Testament the Jews themselves were not always agreed. There seems to have been no determined rule among them, by which the inspired books could be distinguished from profane writings, before the time of Esdras and Nehemias. Then, after the return from the captivity in Babylon an authentic collection was made, and probably by Esdras as its principal author. This canon was approved by the prophets and leaders of the synagogue, though it was by no means closed in such a sense that nothing could be added to it. This seems to be the general opinion of both Jews and Christians; and there is no *certain* evidence of any later canon than that of Esdras, either among the Jews of Palestine or those of Alexandria. This col-

lection of Esdras did not contain the books called deuterocanonical, which were not in the Hebrew text. This canon passed from the Jewish Church to the Christian, not only sanctioned by the testimony of the prophets, but also by our Lord and His apostles. With this canon also came the deuterocanonical books, which were, with some question, generally accepted as inspired. This appears from the testimony of ecclesiastical writers, and the history of the Eastern and Western churches. They were well known to the Jews at the time of our Lord, and were contained in the Alexandrine version, which was in general use before Christ, and which the primitive Church received commended by Him and His apostles. The action of the Church in regard to the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament settled all doubt as to the inspiration of the deuterocanonical books. Cardinal Franzelin, in his work upon the Holy Scriptures, thus sums up the history of the controversy: "First these books were received and sanctioned by the use and practice of the Church, even to the beginning of the fourth century. Then came the discussion in regard to their inspiration among the doctors of the Church, with the comparison of the Hebrew canon, until the decrees of the African councils and the Supreme Pontiffs Innocent I. and Gelasius caused them to be universally received, so that in the mid-

dle ages there was not a vestige of the controversy. Finally the solemn definition of the Church excluded for ever the possibility of doubt." \*

The Rev. Dr. Ubaldi, in his most able and exhaustive work upon the Holy Scripture, argues for the authenticity of the canon of the Council of Nicæa, which includes the deuterocanonical books among the inspired writings.† But if this canon be genuine it has not been of universal reception, although the proof in its favor is very strong.

As regards the canon of the New Testament there has been also some controversy, though not general, nor of great moment. The books in regard to which there was discussion were the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Catholic Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John. Here the doubt among ecclesiastical writers was rather negative than positive, and concerned principally the genuineness of the epistles. The Epistle to the Hebrews was never doubted in the East, and, though controverted by some writers in the West, was generally reckoned in the sacred canon. These doubts arose from private controversies with heretics, who sought to abuse the language of St.

\* Franzelin, "De Divinis Scripturis," XIV.

† Ubaldi, "Int. in Sac. Script.," II. 233-242.

Paul to the support of their errors. The controversy respecting the Apocalypse was longer and more grave, arising principally from the disputes of Eastern doctors, and especially from the example of Dionysius of Alexandria, who first among the orthodox writers, ventured to reject this book and to argue against its authenticity from intrinsic reasons.

This short outline of the history of the various parts of the canonical Scriptures not only shows the possibility of difference of opinion among Christians, but the necessity of the action of the Church in a matter so essential to faith.

In deciding the canonicity of the sacred books, the Church has also, by her supreme authority, rejected those which were spurious.

There are certain books to which reference is made in the Old Testament. It may be of interest briefly to notice them :

“The Book of the Wars of the Lord.” Numbers **xxi.** 14.

“The Book of the Covenant.” Exodus **xxiv.** 7, 4 Kings **xxiii.** 2.

“The Book of the Just.” Josue **x.** 13, 2 Kings **i.** 18.

“The Book of Nathan the prophet.” 1 Paralipomenon **xxix.** 29, 2 Par. **ix.** 29.

“The Book of Gad the seer.” 1 Par. **xxix.** 29. .

“The Book of Samuel the seer.” 1 Par. xxix. 29.

“The three thousand Parables of Solomon.” 3 Kings iv. 32.

“The Book of Addo, the prophet, and his Vision against Jeroboam.” 2 Par. xiii. 22, ix. 29, xii. 15.

“The Book of Ahias the Silonite.” 2 Par. ix. 29.

“The Book of Semeias the prophet.” 2 Par. xii. 15.

“The Words of Jehu, the Son of Hanani.” 2 Par. xx. 34.

“The Words of Hozai.” 2 Par. xxxiii. 19.

“The Book of the Words of the days of Solomon.” 3 Kings xi. 41.

“The Book of the Words of the days of the Kings of Juda.” 3 Kings xiv. 29, 2 Par. xxxiii. 18.

“The Acts of Ozias, written by Isaias the son of Amos.” 2 Par. xxvi. 22.

“The Descriptions of Jeremias the prophet.” 2 Mach. ii. 1.

“The Book of the days of the priesthood of John Hyrcanus.” 1 Mach. xvi. 24.

“Five Books of Jason of Cyrene.” 2 Mach. ii. 24.

These books in great measure are lost, except those portions which are supposed to be incorporated in the canonical Scriptures. Some Christian writers, and among them St. John Chrysostom, thought them

to have been divinely inspired, and that they were allowed to pass away because their use was simply for the Jewish economy and not for the Church of Christ. The more general opinion, however, is that, so far as their substance is not contained in the canonical books, they were simply human writings. Some of these lost books are probably found under a different name and form in the Scriptures. The first two books of Kings are supposed to have been composed by Samuel himself from his own commentaries, and those of Nathan and Gad.

In the New Testament "the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam" is referred to by St. Jude, i. 14. In Colossians iv. 16 St. Paul writes: "When this epistle shall have been read with you, cause that it also be read in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you read that which is of the Laodiceans." This, however, may refer to a letter written by the Laodicean Christians, or to another of the epistles of St. Paul written from Laodicea. It does not necessarily imply another epistle from the hand of the apostle.

Among the apocryphal books are those which are worthy of praise and useful for instruction, which, indeed, were counted by many as inspired, and were found in some ancient versions of the Bible. The positive decision of the Church alone has settled the



question of their canonicity. Even in this brief sketch it may be well to enumerate them, as it shows how entirely we must depend upon the divine ecclesiastical tradition :

The Prayer of Manasses, or the appendix to 2 Paralipomenon.

The Third and Fourth Books of Esdras.

The Preface to the Lamentations of Jeremias.

The Prologue to the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

The Appendix to the Book of Job, found in the LXX. Version.

The Allocution of the wife of Job, also found in the LXX. Version.

Psalms 151, found in some copies of the LXX. Version.

The Prayer of Solomon, an appendix to the Book of Ecclesiasticus.

The Third and Fourth Books of the Machabees.

The Epistle of St. Barnabas.

The First Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians.

The Book of Hermas the Pastor.

All these books are to be found in some editions of the Scriptures, and were accounted by some of the Fathers as inspired.

The following writings are not found in any of the copies of the Bible, and are not reckoned as authentic, while some are undoubtedly spurious :

The Epistle of Abgarus, the King of Edessa, to our Lord.

The Response of our Lord to Abgarus.

Three Epistles of the Blessed Virgin Mary, one to St. Ignatius, one to the Florentines, and another to the Messanenses.

An Epistle of St. Paul to Seneca the philosopher.

Although the genuineness of these writings be denied, yet they are pious in sentiment, and contain no word contrary to faith.

Among the apocryphal books condemned and spurious, which have been principally used by heretics for the support of their errors, are :

The Testament of Adam ; the Book of the Daughters of Adam ; the Book of the Penitence of Adam ; the Apocalypse of Adam, and the Precepts of Adam to his son Seth.

The Gospel of Eve.

The Prophecy of Enoch.

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs.

The Testament of Moses, with the Apocalypse or Assumption of Moses.

The Testament of Job.

The Book of Ugias the giant.

The Psalter of Solomon.

The Ascension and Vision of Isaias.

The Apocalypse and Vision of Elias.

There is little to be said in regard to these books. They certainly are apocryphal, and many of them are lost. The prophecy of Enoch is not genuine, and is filled with errors. It is probable that St. Jude referred to another book (v. 14) which does not exist, or that the original prophecy was afterwards corrupted.

Among the apocryphal books of the New Testament are found writings of the same class :

The Second Gospel to the Hebrews.

The Gospel of Marcion.

The First Gospel of St. James, the brother of our Lord.

The Gospel of the Infant Saviour.

The Arab Gospel of the Infancy.

The Gospel of Thomas.

The Gospel of Nicodemus.

The History of Joseph the Carpenter.

The Gospel of Thaddeus the Apostle.

The Gospel of Matthias the Apostle.

The Gospel of St. Peter.

The Gospel of St. Andrew.

The Gospel of St. Bartholomew.

The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles.

The Eternal Gospel.

The Gospel of Apelles.

The Gospel of Basil.

The Gospel of Cerinthus.

The Vindication of the Saviour.

The Death of Pontius Pilate.

The History of Joseph of Arimathea.

The Acts of the Apostles.

The Acts of Peter and Paul.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla.

The Acts of Barnabas.

The Acts of Philip the Apostle.

The Acts of Andrew, of Andrew and Matthias, of Thomas, of Matthew, of Bartholomew, of Thaddeus, of John.

The Book of the Apostolical Canons.

There are also apocryphal epistles of St. Paul to the Laodiceans, of St. Peter to James, and of St. John to one sick of the dropsy.

There is also the spurious Apocalypse of St. John, one of St. Peter, one of St. Paul, one of St. Bartholomew, one of St. Thomas, and one of St. Stephen Protomartyr.

Some of these books are named and rejected in the decree of Gelasius upon the canon of Holy Scripture.

We have taken the time and space to enumerate these writings, partly useful, partly pernicious, which have been, by the authority of the Catholic Church, excluded from the sacred canon, not only for the interest which many will feel in the history,

but also to indicate the divine character of that work which belongs to the Church in her supreme magistracy. Among so many books, who but the Spirit of God could indicate the true and the false? Upon whose testimony could we rely for an infallible judgment? The word of God alone can rightly authenticate the Scriptures which were inspired by His Spirit.

We shall now add a brief notice of the action of the Church in regard to the canon of Holy Scripture. Before the action of the councils or of the Supreme Pontiff, there are catalogues given by the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers. These catalogues are not perfect, and give only the received opinion among the early Christians. The oldest catalogue known is that of Papias, or Caius, probably as old as the second century. In this catalogue the Book of Wisdom follows the Second Epistle of St. John, while the Epistle to the Hebrews, that of St. James, the Third of St. John, and the Second and Third of St. Peter are omitted.

Melito of Sardis omits Esther and Nehemias. Cyril and the Council of Laodicea omit the Apocalypse.

The apostolic canons enumerate Judith, three books of Machabees, Ecclesiasticus, and two epistles of Clement. The Athanasian synopsis omits Esther and admits Baruch, the Song of the Three Children, and the History of Bel and the Dragon. Prior to the

close of the fourth century there is not a single catalogue of the Scriptures which wholly accords with the canon admitted by Protestants.\* In the year 397 a council was held at Carthage, at which St. Augustine assisted. It gives at length the list of the Scriptures to be held canonical, and founds this list upon the received tradition. In this canon are found precisely the books judged sacred by Innocent I., A.D. 405, and all the writings which, though approved by the Church, have been rejected as apocryphal by Protestants.

The canon of the Nicene Council, to which we have already referred, is exactly the same as that of the Council of Trent. The letter of Innocent I., A.D. 405, gives also the same catalogue, with the condemnation of certain false Gospels and Epistles. The Prophecy of Baruch is included, as was usual then, under the name of Jeremias. In this decree the Supreme Pontiff does not propose anything new, but gives the received and established tradition of the Church, and his predecessors in the Holy See.

At the end of the fifth century, in a council of seventy bishops at Rome, A.D. 495, Pope Gelasius, in a solemn decree, gives the canon of the inspired books. His list is precisely that of Innocent I., ex-

\* Waterworth, "Origin of Anglicanism," p. 220.

cept that he enumerates one book of Esdras and one book of the Machabees ; yet there is no doubt that this is only to exclude the third book, which is apocryphal. In the text of Harduin we find, however, enumerated “two books of Esdras and two books of the Machabees.”

The same canon is found among the constitutions of the Apostolic See, published as an appendix to the works of St. Leo.

From the close of the fifth century this same canon of Scripture seems to have been followed throughout nearly the whole world, and almost every writer upon the sacred books accepts it as unquestioned.

In the Œcumenical Council of Florence, which closed A.D. 1442, the decree of Eugene IV., the sacred council concurring, sets forth the canon as proclaimed by Innocent I. and Gelasius, and afterwards by the Fathers of Trent. On this occasion the deuterocanonical books were solemnly defined to be a part of the inspired word of God, and in the argument against the Greeks were explicitly quoted. The Machabees were cited for their testimony in favor of the doctrine of purgatory, and Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus for the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son.

It only remains to give the decree of the Council of Trent, April, 1546 :

“The sacred and holy, œcumenical, and general Synod of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the three legates of the Apostolic See presiding, keeping this always in view : that, errors being removed, the purity of the Gospel be preserved in the Church ; which Gospel, before promised through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth and moral discipline ; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand ; following the examples of the orthodox fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence all the books both of the Old and New Testament, seeing that one God is the author of both. And it has thought it meet that a list of the sacred books be inserted in this decree, lest a doubt may arise in any one’s mind which are the books that are received by this synod. They are as set down here below : Of the Old Testament, the five books of Moses—to wit, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy ; Josue,



Judges, Ruth ; four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, the first book of Esdras, and the second, which is called Nehemias ; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidical Psalter, consisting of a hundred and fifty psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Jeremias,\* with Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, the twelve minor prophets—to wit, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggæus, Zacharias, Malachias—two books of the Machabees, the first and the second.

“Of the New Testament, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ; the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke the Evangelist ; fourteen Epistles of Paul the apostle, one to the Romans, two to the Coninthians, one to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews ; two of Peter the apostle, three of John the apostle, one of the Apostle James, one of Jude the apostle, and the Apocalypse of John the apostle.

“But if any one receive not as sacred and canonical the said books entire, with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church,

\* The holy synod under Jeremias includes the Lamentations.

and as they are contained in the old Vulgate edition, and knowingly and willingly condemn the traditions aforesaid, let him be anathema. Let all, therefore, understand in what order, and in what manner, the said synod, after having laid the foundation of the confession of faith, will proceed, and what testimonies and authorities it will mainly use in confirming dogmas and in restoring morals in the Church."

The same belief of the Catholic Church was solemnly declared at the Œcumenical Council of the Vatican, April, 1870:

"It is known to all that the heresies which the Fathers of Trent condemned, and which rejected the divine authority of the Church to teach, and, instead, subjected all things belonging to religion to the judgment of each individual, were in the course of time broken up into many sects; and that, as these differed and disputed with each other, it came to pass at length that all belief in Christ was overthrown in the minds of not a few. And so the Sacred Scriptures themselves, which they had at first held up as the only source and judge of Christian doctrine, were no longer held as divine, but, on the contrary, began to be counted among myths and fables.

"The supernatural revelation, according to the belief of the universal Church, as declared by the holy Council of Trent, is contained in the written books,

and in the unwritten traditions which have come to us as received orally from Christ Himself by the apostles, or handed down from the apostles taught by the Holy Ghost. And these books of the Old and New Testaments are to be received as sacred and canonical, in their integrity and with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the same council, and are had in the old Vulgate Latin edition. But the Church does hold them sacred and canonical, not for the reason that they have been compiled by human industry alone, and afterward approved by her authority ; nor only because they contain revelation without error, but because, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and as such have been delivered to the Church herself.

“ If any one shall refuse to receive for sacred and canonical the books of Holy Scripture in their integrity, with all their parts, according as they were enumerated by the holy Council of Trent, or shall deny that they were inspired by God, let him be anathema.”

### III.

The Catholic doctrine in regard to the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

In this portion of our lecture we propose briefly to

recall the teaching of the Church as to the *inspiration* of the canonical books, and its exact meaning. In what sense must we believe that the sacred writings are the work of the Holy Ghost?

The holy Council of Trent, whose decree we have just rehearsed, declares that "the saving truth and moral discipline are contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions which have come to the Church by the *dictation* of the Holy Spirit," and that "one God is the *author* of both," and that the "canonical books in *all their parts* must be received" as divine Scripture under pain of anathema.

The same doctrine is contained in all the decrees of the Roman Pontiffs, or of councils which touch the subject of the inspired word.

The Fifth General Council, A.D. 553, in condemning the error of Theodore of Mopsuesta, because he had asserted that the Books of Solomon were not written by *prophetical grace*, assumes the writer to have been under the special influence of the Spirit of God. He had also rejected the Book of Job, saying that a wise pagan had written it, thus speaking "against the Holy Ghost, who wrote it with him."

In like manner he denied the *prophetical dictation* to the author of the Canticles. These condemnations speak the mind of the council, that the inspired books were written under the dictation of the Spirit.

The decree of Pope Gelasius, A.D. 495, already cited, affirms the Scriptures to have been "written or made by the operation of God."

In the profession of faith proposed by the Synod of Carthage in the ordination of bishops, accepted by Leo IX., and still in the Roman Pontifical, are these words: "I believe that one God and Lord Almighty is the *author* of the Old and New Testament, of the Law, the Prophets and Apostles."

So the canon of the Council of Toledo, A.D. 447, framed from the dogmatic epistle of the Pope, declares anathema to any one who shall say "that one is the God of the Old Law, and another the God of the Gospels."

In the creed proposed by Innocent III. to the Waldenses, A.D. 1210, faith is demanded in "the *one Lord* of the New and Old Testament, who, a Trinity, created all things from nothing."

The profession of faith proposed by Clement IV. in the Œcumenical Council of Lyons, A.D. 1274, declares: "We believe one God to be the *author* of the New and Old Testament, of the Law, and the Prophets, and the Apostles."

Similar to this was the language of the bull of Eugene IV. in the Council of Florence, A.D. 1441: "The Holy Roman Church professes one and the same God as the author of the Old and New Testament, that is,

of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospels, since by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit the holy men of each Testament spoke, whose books she receives and venerates.”

In the Vatican decrees the word *inspiration* is directly expressed, and its conception more explicitly stated: “This supernatural revelation is contained in the written books and unwritten traditions according to the universal faith of the Church.” “These books the Church holds sacred because they were written by the *inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, and have God for their author, not because they were compiled by human industry and then approved, nor even because they contain the revelation of God without error.” So the council pronounces anathema to any one who shall deny “that the entire books, in all their parts, were *divinely inspired*.”

The Church having thus pronounced her decision in regard to the inspiration of the canonical books, it is evident that she teaches that the sacred writers, whose agency was employed by God, acted under the *dictation* of the Holy Ghost. Nothing less than this can be gathered from the words of the decrees, and especially from the exact language of the Vatican Council.

The Scriptural writers themselves also testify that they were under the direct influence of the Divine Spirit.

“Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Write thee all the words that I have spoken to thee in a book.” \*

“And the Lord said to me: Take thee a great book, and write in it with a man’s pen.” †

“I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one that spoke. And He said to me: Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee. ‡ And the Spirit entered into me, and after that He spoke to me.”

Thus St. Peter addresses the apostles: “Men, brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David.” §

So our Lord speaks to the Jews: “Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of me.” ||

To the same effect are the words of St. Peter and St. Paul: “Prophècy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost.” ¶

“All Scripture inspired by God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice.” \*\*

\* Jeremias xxx. 2.

§ Acts i. 16.

† Isaias viii. 1.

|| St. John v. 39.

\*\* 2 St. Timothy iii. 16.

‡ Ezechiel ii. 1, 2.

¶ 2 St. Peter, i. 21.

"I was in the Spirit," says St. John, "on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, saying: What thou seest write in a book, and send to the seven churches." \*

The uniform practice of the Catholic Church has been to venerate the books of Scripture in all their parts as the work of the Spirit of God. The language of the Christian Fathers is a manifest evidence of this belief and veneration. St. Clement, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, writes: "Diligently examine the Scriptures, which are the *true oracles* of God." † Such are also the words of St. Irenæus: "Knowing well, because the Scriptures are perfect, since they were spoken by the Word and His Spirit." ‡

Clement of Alexandria, after reciting passages of the Old and New Testament, argues: "I can bring you innumerable Scriptures, of which not a jot or tittle shall pass away, for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, has spoken them." §

St. Athanasius affirms "that the words of Scripture were written by the divine influence; that the sacred books are fountains of salvation, and that the Holy Spirit was in the writers of them." || St. Cyril of

\* Apocalypse i. 10, 11.

§ "Strom.," II.

† Chap. xlv.

‡ "Contra Hær.," II. 28.

|| "Epist. Fest.," 39.



Jerusalem says that “the Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God, and that He is their author.” \* St. John Chrysostom uses this language: “All that is in Scripture we must thoroughly examine; for all are dictated by the Holy Ghost, and nothing is written in vain.” “Not an iota, not a point is there in Scripture in vain.” †

St. Gregory the Great says: “The author of the book is the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, wrote these things who dictated them to be written. He Himself wrote who inspired them in the act of writing.” ‡

In order to understand better the doctrine of the Church, thus stated by her supreme councils and sustained by the Scriptures and the Fathers, it will be well, even in this brief discourse, to define the meaning of *inspiration*, and thus to see precisely what we are required to believe.

Inspiration signifies the action of the Divine Spirit upon the human intelligence and will, whereby any one is impelled to speak or to write in some special way designed by God. The agents so inspired are impelled to write what God reveals, suggests, or wills that they should write. If there be suggestion only, then the things which the Holy Spirit wills to be writ-

\* Catech., I. 6, IV. 34.

† Hom. XXXVI. in S. Joan. Hom. XXI. et XLII. in Gen.

‡ Moral. in Job i., § 2.

ten are brought to mind. If there be revelation, then truths which could not naturally be known, which are contained in the divine intelligence, are unfolded to the mind of the writer. Revelation does not necessarily imply inspiration, nor does inspiration imply revelation. So also all revelation is suggestion, but not all suggestion revelation ; because much that may be suggested might be of the natural order, and already known by reason or history. But inspiration, as applied to the sacred writers, implies that assistance and help of the Holy Spirit which, though not in any way interfering with the liberty or natural gifts of the agent, impels him to execute the work divinely proposed, and excludes all liability to error. Thus it is certain that in Holy Scripture there can be no falsehood or error, and that God is the author of the inspired books.\* It is, then, in the mind of the Church, not sufficient to hold that the inspiration vouchsafed to the sacred writers concerns only those parts of the Scripture which treat directly or indirectly of faith and morals. Such an opinion would destroy the divinity of the canonical books, leaving them open to many errors of fact, and to the possibility of so construing them that God could not be their author. We have seen in our former lecture how

\* See Essay by Cardinal Manning.

many of the more orthodox Protestants hold this opinion, and thus renounce any true doctrine of inspiration.

It is not, however, necessary to believe that the influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind of the writer extends, not simply to the words and thoughts and things signified, but also to the form of expression, the words and even the punctuation, so that the agent was in a manner deprived of his liberty and the use of his natural gifts, and only moved his pen as the Holy Spirit moved it. The doctrine of inspiration approved by the Church and Catholic theologians extends the divine authorship to all the sacred books, and to each part of the Scripture ; but does not affect the material form of the words, which are the writer's own expression, depending upon his individual style, genius, or culture. The assistance of the Holy Ghost is, however, such that the words chosen by the writer shall sufficiently and faithfully express the divine mind.

Such an explanation, while it is in complete accord with the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs and the œcumenical councils, is also consonant with the nature and style of the sacred books. Each writer has his own peculiar gifts, his own mode of expression, the varieties of his own genius. This genius and this variety are usurped by the Divine Inspirer, who

causes His agents, each in his own way, to proclaim the truth and works of God.

While this variety naturally springs from the freedom of the writer employed by the Holy Ghost, there is no possibility of error, or failure to express precisely that which is suggested by the Divine Intelligence.

No Catholic, however, can admit that the Holy Scriptures contain error or falsehood in science, history, or chronology. There may be variations in the text, or errors in copying the manuscripts; but wherever the text is undoubtedly established, the supposition of falsehood in the contents of that text cannot be admitted. St. Augustine says: "If anything absurd be alleged to be there, no man may say, 'The author of this book did not hold the truth.' But he must say, either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator was in error, or you do not understand it." \* "Let us believe and irremovably affirm that in Scripture falsehood has no place. As for us, in the history of our religion, upheld by divine authority, we have no doubt that whatsoever is opposed to it is most false, let the literature of the world say what it will of it. We cannot say the manuscript is faulty, for all the corrected Latin versions have

\* S. Aug. contra Faustum, XI. § 5.

it so. It remains that you do not understand it.” “Even in the Holy Scriptures themselves, the things of which I am ignorant are many more than the things which I know.”\* “Of what weight,” says Cardinal Manning, “are any number of residual difficulties against the standing, perpetual, and luminous miracle which is the continuous manifestation of a supernatural history among men; a history the characters, proportions, and features of which are, like the order to which it belongs, divine, and therefore transcend the ordinary course of nations and of men? One of these divine facts, and that which is the centre and source of all our certainty, is the perpetual voice of the Church of God. That voice has declared to us that the sacred books were written by inspiration; and this is simply to be believed, because it is divinely true.”† It matters not if seeming difficulties be presented which surpass the bounds of our experience, or refuse the *criteria* of our statistics. Catholics in this faith have never wavered. Their veneration for the inspired word has never weakened with the so-called discoveries of modern science, the attacks of chronologists, or the theorists of philosophy. They know “that God is true, even if every man be

\* “De Civ. Dei,” XVIII. 40; Contra Faustum, XI. 6.

† Manning, “Essay upon the Inspiration of Scripture.”

found a liar” ;\* and they are not ready at the first notes of the battle to yield the ground to their adversaries, and give up all that is of value in the doctrine of Scriptural inspiration. The cries of infidelity, fortified with the problems of geology, the speculations of astronomy, or the theories of evolution, alarm not those who have a certain creed. While many Protestants shrink back before the advancing tide of atheism, and reduce their faith to the *minimum*, and yield up their Bible as faulty and worthless, Catholics are unmoved. Jesus Christ is the God-Man. The Church is His body and His fulness. Revelation reaches a world of which eternity and infinity are conditions. Here the child of faith is wiser than the proudest philosopher; here no shaft of man’s devising can pierce the heart which has known the “truth as it is in Jesus.” The intelligence illumined looks beyond the world of sense to the land of light, where one by one all shadows roll away, and the clouds vanish before the rising sun. Here, and here alone, the Sacred Scriptures will maintain their divine character, and through them their Author, the Holy Ghost, will speak to His obedient and believing children.

\*Rom. iii. 4.

## IV.

The proper use of the Bible, in accordance with Catholic faith and piety.

The brief view which we have already given of the zeal and care which the Church has shown in the preservation of the Holy Scriptures, will make manifest the importance which she attaches to the written oracles of God and their proper use. We shall, therefore, close these lectures with a short statement of her labors in bringing the sacred books before her children, and the manner in which she would have us study them to the profit of our souls.

1. In the first lecture of this course we have sufficiently shown how earnestly the Church took care to preserve the original manuscripts, and to copy them for the instruction of the faithful. When we consider that the original text could only be found in a few principal copies, and that in the early age the Christian Fathers were most familiar with the very words of the Gospels, we see how constant and faithful was the vigilance of her bishops and priests. There is no doubt that the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament was in general use at the time of our Lord and His apostles; and it is even quoted by them in the Gospels and Epistles. This certainly gives a high sanction to this translation. The history

of this most important version is of great interest. In the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who succeeded to the throne of Egypt about 285 years before Christ, the Jews settled there were without any copy of the law which they professed, and were forgetting the rites and practices of their religion. To obviate this evil, and to enrich the library of his sovereign, Demetrius Phalereus proposed to call to Alexandria a number of Jews, perfectly conversant with both the Greek and Hebrew tongues, in order to translate the Scriptures into the former language. Ptolemy assented, and wrote to the High-Priest, begging him to send to Alexandria six persons from every tribe, distinguished for their learning and integrity, who might undertake this task of translation. This letter was carried to the Pontiff Eleazarus by Andrew and Aristeeas. The result was that seventy-two persons went to Alexandria, and in time completed the version, which, being read in the presence of the Hellenistic Jews, was by them declared to be a faithful translation of the inspired original. Whether this version was completed by the first translators, or afterwards finished by different hands, it was the recognized edition of the Old Testament, held in general honor at the time of our Lord and in the early Church. Some of the early Fathers even considered it to be inspired, so great was their veneration for it. Though



there be no certain ground for attributing inspiration to the translators, yet their work was the special providence and counsel of God ; and while free from any errors against faith or morals, is substantially conformed to the original text. For many centuries the sacred books which contained the prophecies of our Lord and His Church were known to the Jews only. Now, as the epoch of redemption drew nigh, it was fitting that they should be made known to other nations, to whom the Gospel of Christ should be preached, that they also might see the predictions of the Old Law concerning the Messiah and His dispensation. This version, being received by the Jews generally throughout the world at the time of our Lord, was naturally adopted by the Christians of the early age. It was in constant use by the Greeks, and those to whom their language was familiar, while the Western Church availed itself of a Latin version derived and translated from it. So many copies were made of this Alexandrine Version, that among the many editions there were defects and errors which it was the constant care of the Church to correct. Distinguished among these labors is the great work of Origen, which in four parallel columns gives the comparison of different copies. Celebrated copies of the Septuagint Version, now existing, are the Vatican, Alexandrine, and Sinaitic manuscripts, which include

also the Greek text of the New Testament. All these ancient manuscripts contain the deuterocanonical books, according to the canon of the Catholic Church. After the invention of printing, as we have seen in the first lecture, the scholars of the Church at once produced an accurate edition of the Septuagint Version in type. The polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes, A.D. 1515–1517, is especially notable. It was followed by the Antwerp polyglot of 1571 and the Paris polyglot of 1645. The Roman edition of 1587, published by command of Sixtus V., exceeds all the former ones. It was taken from the Vatican Codex, with the comparison of many other manuscripts, and, besides its intrinsic value, possessed the approbation of the Supreme Pontiff. In our own times editions of great importance have been published, one in 1857 under the patronage of Cardinal Mai; and one under the auspices of Pius IX. was begun in 1868, which is a *fac-simile* of the Vatican Codex, from the press of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith.

Besides these assiduous labors in the copying and circulation of this accurate version of the Scriptures, the Church, through her scholars and doctors, with the encouragement of the Apostolic See, has been most diligent to preserve and guard from error the original text. The sacred books of the Old Testament called proto-canonical were written in the He-

brew language, with the exception of certain portions of 1 Esdras, of Daniel, and of Jeremias, which were in the Chaldaic tongue. The seven deuterocanonical books are not found in Hebrew, but in Greek, although the first book of Machabees, Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch were written in Hebrew, while Judith and Tobias were in Chaldee. Still, the only version remaining of these writings is in the Greek editions of which we have spoken. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament, through the care of the Church and her children, still exists *substantially* entire and incorrupt, although some errors may have been committed by the copyists. The original was without vocal points, which were supplied after the sixth century by the Masorites, eminent scholars in the Jewish tradition. The division of the sacred text into chapters was the work of Cardinal Hugo in the thirteenth century, who was also the author of the Latin Concordance; and a further subdivision of the chapters into verses was made by Robert Stephens in 1551. The principal editions of the Hebrew text are that of Soncino, in small folio, A.D. 1488; that of the Complutensian Polyglot, 1517; and the second Bomberg edition, printed at Venice in 1525.

The original text of the books of the New Testament has also come to us *substantially* entire and incorrupt. Although the sacred writers were Jews,

still the Greek language was better known to them and their readers than the Hebrew ; and, with the exception of St. Matthew, all wrote their Gospels or Epistles in the Greek. The Gospel of St. Matthew was probably written in Hebrew. Thus Origen says : “The first Gospel was written by Matthew, formerly the publican, who composed it in the Hebrew tongue for the Jews who were converted to the faith.” This Gospel was afterwards translated into Greek, the language of the other books of the New Testament. This original text was the great treasure of the Church. Many copies were made of it, and circulated among Christians throughout the world. It became familiar through the daily reading in the churches and the commentaries of the Fathers and Doctors. The Church watched with great vigilance over the purity of the Scriptures, which heretics often endeavored to corrupt with the interpolation of their private readings. The study of the sacred text was constant and faithful. The words of the inspired writings were committed to memory, and religiously kept for the consolation and protection of believers, who were every day exposed to persecution and death. Hence any substantial corruption of the text was impossible. In the great persecution of Diocletian many of the faithful suffered torments, and even gave up their lives, rather than deliver the sacred books into

the hands of the pagan. There are also copies of almost every age; so that, going back through the various epochs of the Church, even to the third century, we can compare our text with that which the Fathers used before our day. Many versions of ancient date are likewise found, in which appears the substance of the original in the translations derived from the primary Greek text.

Among the versions of the Holy Scriptures, the only one declared *authentic* by the Church is the Latin Vulgate. The following is the language of the holy Council of Trent: "The holy synod, considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions now in circulation of the Sacred Books is to be held as authentic, ordains and declares that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as *authentic*; and that no one is to dare or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever." The same recognition of the Vulgate is made by the Vatican Council. This declaration of the *authenticity* of this version not only establishes it as the authorized Bible for the faithful, but also assures us, on divine authority, that it is in conformity with the original Scriptures, and that it contains no

important error touching history or fact, as well as faith and morals.

The history of this celebrated version takes us to the very first ages of the Church. Among the many Latin translations of the Scriptures, the one most in use, commended by the Fathers and bishops, was the ancient *Italic* edition. This version is certainly as old as the second century, and was probably made in Italy under the care of the Supreme Pontiffs. Upon this version, and the comparison of its many editions, St. Jerome compiled the Latin Vulgate at the request of Pope St. Damasus. It appeared A.D. 384, and from that date, with the constant care of the Apostolic See, has continued *substantially* the same, as the authorized translation of the Scriptures for common and ecclesiastical use. It embraces the whole canon received by the Catholic Church, the proto-canonical and the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament, as well as the entire New Testament. The proto-canonical books of the Old Testament are the work of St. Jerome, with the exception of the Psalms, which are probably from the *Italic* version. The Books of Tobias and Judith are also the translation of St. Jerome, while the first and second Machabees, Baruch, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Esther, and parts of Daniel are from the ancient version.\*

\* See Dr. Ubaldi, 'Int. ad Scrip. Sac.," I., Thesis xxix.

The Vulgate has passed through many revisions through the labors of the Church and her doctors, and the vigilance of the Roman Pontiffs. The present standard edition is that of Sixtus V., completed by the authority of Clement VIII., and first published at Rome A.D. 1592.

This is the authorized Bible for the Church, and the translations made into the vernacular of various nations have been made from it, with the diligent comparison of the original text and, where it was possible, of the ancient manuscripts. These translations bear the *local* authority of the bishops under whose patronage and approbation they were issued. We have seen how great was the labor of the Church to place before her children the sacred word in all languages. This has abundantly appeared during the ages when the manuscripts were so carefully and constantly copied. Buckingham, in his work on "The Bible in the Middle Ages," makes the following summary: "From the invention of printing to the period of the Reformation there appeared in the ancient languages eighty-four editions of the Scriptures, sixty-two in Hebrew, of which twelve were of the Old Testament entire, and fifty of detached portions; and twenty-two in Greek, of which three were of the Old Testament, twelve of the New, and seven of separate portions of the Bible. In the Latin, which occupied an interme-

diate position, as being the universal language of the priesthood, and a familiar tongue to all the learned men in the Christian world, there were published three hundred and forty-three editions, of which one hundred and forty-eight were of the whole Bible, sixty-two of the New Testament, and one hundred and thirty-three of separate books. In the modern languages, the dialects of the humblest and poorest among the people, there were issued one hundred and ninety-eight editions, of which one hundred and four were of the entire Bible, comprising twenty in Italian, twenty-six in French, nineteen in Flemish, two in Spanish, six in Bohemian, one in Slavonic, and thirty in German; and ninety-four of single portions of the Scriptures, consisting chiefly of copies of the New Testament and the Psalms. In all, including the polyglots, six hundred and twenty editions of the Bible and its parts, of which one hundred and ninety-eight were in the languages of the laity, had issued from the press with the sanction and at the instance of the Church, in the countries where she reigned supreme, before the first Protestant version was sent forth into the world.” \*

The same zeal continues to this day, in the diligent study of the inspired word, among the scholars of the

\* Buckingham, pp. 64, 65.



Church, whose erudition is far superior to that of the most learned among modern Protestants. The best translations are the work of Catholic missionaries, who bring great knowledge as well as self-denial to their apostolic labors; and with these versions no fault has ever been found. Rather, as we have seen in our last lecture, they have sometimes been adopted by the Bible Societies, which by this act have confessed their superiority, as well as the imperfection of their own editions.

Before we close this portion of our discourse it is proper to revert for a moment to the history of the English version in general use among ourselves.

This version is commonly styled the Douay or Rhemish Bible. The college or seminary of Douay had been founded in 1568 by the exertions of Cardinal Allen, some time fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. A few years afterwards its members were obliged to migrate for a time to France, owing to the political troubles in Flanders. They established themselves at Rheims, where one of their first labors was the translation of the Holy Scriptures into English. Those to whom this labor was entrusted were Dr. William Allen, afterwards Cardinal; Dr. Gregory Martin, of St. John's College, Oxford; Dr. Richard Bristow, of Christ Church and Exeter; and John Reynolds, of New College. Martin was the translator of the text,

which the rest revised ; and the annotations were made by Bristow and Allen. Their preface says : “ Since Luther and his followers have pretended that the Catholic Roman faith is contrary to God’s written word, and that the Scriptures were not suffered in vulgar languages, lest the people should see the truth ; and withal these new masters corruptly turning the Bible into diverse tongues, as might best serve their own opinions—against this false suggestion and practice Catholic pastors have, for one especial remedy, set forth true and sincere translations in most languages of the Latin Church.” They also say : “ We translate the old vulgar Latin text, not the common Greek text, for these reasons :

“ 1. It is so ancient that it was used in the Church above thirteen hundred years ago.

“ 2. It is that, by all probability, which St. Jerome afterwards corrected, according to the Greek, by the appointment of Pope Damasus.

“ 3. It is the same which St. Augustine so commended.

“ 4. It has been used, for the most part, ever since in the Church’s service.

“ 5. The Holy Council of Trent, for these and many other important considerations, hath declared and defined this only of all other Latin translations to be authentic.

“6. It is the gravest, sincerest, of greatest majesty and least partiality, as being without all respect of controversies and contentions, specially those of our time.

“7. It is so exact and precise; according to the Greek, both the phrase and the word, that delicate heretics therefore reprehend it of rudeness.

“8. The adversaries themselves, namely Beza, prefer it before all the rest.

“We have used no partiality for the disadvantage of our adversaries, nor no more license than is sufferable in translating of Holy Scripture; continually keeping ourselves, as near as is possible, to our text, and to the very words and phrases which, by long usage, are made venerable; acknowledging, with St. Jerome, that in other writings it is enough in translation to give sense for sense, but that in the Scriptures, lest we miss the sense, we must keep the very words.”

This translation was made soon after the establishment of the college, but owing to lack of means, or their poor estate in exile, the New Testament was not published until 1582, and the Old did not appear till 1609–1610. At these dates these versions were respectively issued, that of the New Testament at Rheims, and that of the Old at Douay, whither the translators returned in 1609.

There were six editions of this Bible printed up to the year 1788, in some of which the spelling is modernized, and there are a few verbal alterations in the text and annotations.

The revision of Rt. Rev. Dr. Challoner, Vicar-Apostolic of the London district, was first published in 1749. It passed through six different editions during his life. He endeavored to remove the obscurities of the old English text, and to correct its orthography, following the standard Vulgate. His work is an able revision of the Douay text in modern English, and has been, since his day, the generally-received Bible among Catholics, while subsequent editions have substantially followed it.

The *correctness* of our English translation has been generally admitted, while its scholarship is everywhere respected.

Dr. Westcott, already quoted, says: "Its merits, and they are considerable, lie in its vocabulary. The language is enriched by the bold reduction of innumerable Latin words to English service." "The scrupulous or even servile adherence of the Rhemists to the text of the Vulgate was not always without advantage. They frequently reproduced with force the original order of the Greek, which is preserved in the Latin; and even while many unpleasant roughnesses occur, there can be little doubt that their version

gained, on the whole, by the faithfulness with which they endeavored to keep the original form of the sacred writings." "When the Latin was capable of guiding them, the Rhemists seem to have followed out their principles honestly ; but wherever it was inadequate or ambiguous they had the niceties of Greek at their command. Their treatment of the article offers a good illustration of the care and skill with which they performed this part of their task. The Greek article cannot, as a general rule, be expressed in Latin. Here, then, the translators were free to follow the Greek text ; and the result is that this critical point of scholarship is dealt with more satisfactorily by them than by any earlier translators. And it must be said, also, that in this respect the revisers of King James werẽ less accurate than the Rhemists, though they had their work before them."\*

2. The Catholic Church has, then, well fulfilled her part in bringing the Sacred Scriptures before her children ; and in her long history nothing has been left undone. Their preservation is owing to her labors ; and all the faithful are taught to venerate and study the written word as the work of the Divine Spirit revealing Himself and His truth to men. No lan-

\* Westcott, "History of the English Bible," pp. 261-266.

guage is strong enough to express the devotion which she teaches towards the venerable words, indited by God Himself, which are her great and inestimable treasure. Yet that devotion must be in accordance with faith, else the Scriptures may become the instruments of evil, as they have often been among the partisans of error. She denies and condemns the Protestant doctrine that the individual is to learn the way of salvation from the reading of the Bible alone, since God has revealed His truth to *her*, “its pillar and ground ;” and since traditions which, “received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ, or from the apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating,” are also of divine authority. “One God is the author both of the written and the unwritten word,” and every believer is to learn the Gospel from the living Church, which speaks to all the ages in the name and person of her Divine Founder.

The Catholic Church is the only infallible interpreter of Scripture, and her faith is necessarily in harmony with the sacred writings. The Holy Ghost cannot contradict Himself. The Council of Trent decrees “that no one, relying on his own skill, shall, in matters of faith and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, wresting the Sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret it contrary to that sense which holy mother Church,

whose office it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, even though such interpretations were never intended to be at any time published." The same decree, in nearly the same language, is reiterated by the Vatican Council. It manifestly explains the proper use of the sacred word which she places in the hands of her children. They are not to employ their private judgment in its interpretation; they are not to look upon it as their only teacher; and they are devoutly to receive it for the end which the all-merciful Spirit had in view in its inspiration.

When the Church forbids the private interpretation of the Scriptures, she takes from us no privilege, but only guards us against danger. Where the sacred text is plain, it is to be taken in its literal sense, which is in full accordance with the Catholic interpretation. Where the words of the writer are "hard to be understood," the reader is not permitted to wrest the oracles of life to his own destruction. In any case, and in every case, the doctrine of the Church is the guide to the knowledge of the Bible. To show any hardship in this denial of private interpretation, it would be necessary to deny the authority of the Church, and to de-

monstrate that she has ever misinterpreted the inspired word to the support of her creed. It is easy, in words, to deny the authority of the Church ; but Catholics meet such a denial with the rehearsal of the Apostolic Confession, "I believe in one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." They declare that the indefectibility and infallibility of the Church are guaranteed by the promise of Christ, whose veracity cannot be questioned, and whose power cannot fail. They point to the standing fact of her existence, which, in face of the world's opposition and the devil's malice, is the greatest of miracles. They also assert the truth, amply demonstrated in these lectures, that where the authority of the Church is questioned, there is no foundation for any revelation, much less for the belief in the Scriptures. Where the Church goes down, sooner or later all faith in the supernatural goes down with it, and there remains only the illogical assertion of contradictory dogmas, which, like the house built upon the sand, crumble before the swelling waves of infidelity. It is necessary to admit the office of the infallible Church or deny the divinity of the Holy Scriptures. And we may challenge the world to show, in honest criticism, any passage of the sacred word which the Catholic teaching has perverted or misinterpreted. In the light of revealed truth the



ecclesiastical tradition is a sure guide ; and the Holy Ghost, who ever speaks in the Church, is permitted to speak to the intellect and the heart in the words which holy men, at His dictation, have left for our edification and sanctification. The way of salvation is thus guarded from error. It does not lie in the reading of the sacred books by every individual left to his unaided reason or possibly erring prejudice. This the Catholic creed and all the records of Christianity deny. There can be no greater error than this, nor one fraught with more terrible evils to the souls of men. It has produced the confusing and contradictory sects of Protestantism. It has well-nigh ruined the faith and hope of thousands who are the victims of a blank atheism, which is the logical sequence of the so-called *Biblical* Christianity. Therefore to read the Holy Scriptures without fear of error, with the light of the city of God upon earth, with the certain guidance of the Divine Spirit, who keeps the Church in the way of truth, is the privilege of Catholics. It is a privilege which belongs not to others, who in their self-confidence are left to the darkness of their own reason, and deprived of the illumination which dwells in the temple which the Holy Trinity fills.

“As often as the heretics bring forth the canonical Scriptures,” says Origen, “they seem to say, ‘Be-

hold, in the houses is the word of truth.' But we are not to credit them, nor to go out from the first and ecclesiastical tradition, nor to believe otherwise than according as the churches of God have by succession transmitted to us."\*

So speaks St. Leo: "It is not lawful to differ, even by one word, from the evangelic and apostolic doctrine, or to think otherwise concerning the divine Scriptures than as the blessed apostles and our fathers learned and taught."†

The holy Fathers, in the light of the teaching of the Church and her immutable faith, interpret the sacred word, and draw from it the plain confirmation of the ecclesiastical tradition. There is, and can be, no contradiction between the Catholic doctrine and the written word. "Heresies and perverse opinions," says St. Augustine, "have sprung up by the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Scriptures, where that which is badly understood is rashly and boldly asserted. Wherefore, with a pious heart, we are to adhere to this sound rule, to rejoice over whatsoever we are able to understand in accordance with the faith wherewith we have been imbued. But as to whatsoever we may not, as yet, be able to understand in accordance with this sound rule of

\* Origen, T. III. in Matt.

† Ep. LXXXII. ad Marcion.

faith, we must put aside all doubt, and defer to some other time the understanding of it, knowing that it is good and true even though we know not what it means.” \*

In the observance of this rule lies safety, as well as the unity of faith. Catholics always are found in unity of belief; and the plain literal sense of Scripture is accepted by them with reverence for the words of the Holy Spirit, and without any attempt to wrest or distort their meaning. Here they challenge their adversaries, who are unwilling to receive the literal interpretation of the text, and are forced often to support their teachings by the most unnatural and sometimes dishonest means. One thing is certain: the Scriptures cannot contradict themselves. Yet they are forced to do this by all the Protestant critics, who, in the exercise of their liberty, attempt to establish a system of belief inconsonant with itself and the truths of revelation. And, confessedly, in the Catholic Church alone can be found unity of faith, which must be the natural result of the work of the Holy Ghost. They, therefore, who wander from this unity read not aright the inspired writings, but by the variety of their private interpretations are convicted of error.

\* Tract XVIII. in Joan. Evang.

The Catholic, devoutly studying the Sacred Scriptures, is not allowed for one moment to look upon them as the *only* fountain of truth. Receiving them as divine upon the authority of the Church, of necessity he accepts the voice of the Church as that of God, and from her learns the faith which is necessary to salvation. She teaches in the name and power of Jesus Christ; and from Him pours out the sanctifying grace which regenerates and glorifies. Neither do the inspired books explicitly contain *all* which we are bound to believe. They were not written for such an end. They are not in the form of a catechism or a creed. They were written to those who were orally taught, and were in possession of the divine teaching communicated from the Holy Spirit through the prophets or the apostles. They imply the knowledge of Christian truth, which they speak of as settled, and which they illumine and make fruitful. This principle, denied by Protestants in theory, is accepted by them in practice, since no one of their many creeds can be substantiated by the words of the Bible; and many of their cherished doctrines are not to be found in the Scriptures. The errors of the sects are surely not deducible from the inspired text, and even some of those truths which they profess to hold are not explicitly stated. Without the Church there is only confusion, with constant contradiction of the

first principles of logic. The Holy Scriptures are true and divine in every part, but they are not in any sense the only rule of faith. All the interpretations of men could never establish any article of the Christian creed. No man, however holy or learned, is able to make a faith for himself. To be a Christian he must receive and hold the teachings of Christ and His apostles, which can never fail. For any doctrine to be of Catholic faith two things are necessary : first, that it be revealed ; and, secondly, that it be proposed to us by the Church. The second condition really presupposes the first ; for as the apostles were commissioned to teach only such truths as they had received from Christ, so their successors, by virtue of the same commission and under the guidance of the same Spirit, continued to teach the same. Accepting, therefore, the truth proposed by the Church and her infallible head, we are not to inquire if this doctrine revealed by God be found in the written oracles. We are certain that the Holy Ghost cannot be divided against Himself ; that, teaching in the Church, He cannot contradict the words He has inspired. Until the days of Protestant heresy, which attacked the fundamental doctrine of the authority of the Church, it was never even hinted that the whole deposit of faith must be explicitly stated in the sacred canon. “Although,” says St. Augustine, “no ex-

ample of the matter in question can be produced from the canonical Scriptures, yet here also is the truth of the Scriptures held by us, since we do that which has now obtained the sanction of the universal Church, which the authority of the Scriptures themselves commends." \* The Church is a living and speaking authority preserved by Jesus Christ Himself, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, who day by day brings to her mind all truth, that she may stand to the end of the ages "its pillar and ground." If we were left to find in the written word not only the substance but also the form of our dogmas, we should long ago have fallen into the uncertainty of doubt and the misery of unbelief. Protestants, casting off the authority of the living, divine guide, have thrown away, one after another, the articles of the Christian creed ; and shielding themselves by the real or pretended silence of the sacred text, have come little by little to the denial of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the sacraments of grace by which the redemption is applied to men. The theory that everything to be believed must appear in plain words in Holy Scripture is among the most dangerous errors of our time. It is consonant with the assertion of the right of private interpretation which overthrows the

\* T. IX. "Contra. Crescon. Donat."

office of the Church, and divorces what God has joined together, the divine tradition and the written word. This separation is destructive of the life and power of the inspired writings, as well as of the end for which the Spirit of truth indited them.

Our doctrine, therefore, is in harmony with all Christian antiquity, and with the teachings of human reason. The Redeemer of our race has founded His Church upon an immovable rock, and by miracles of unquestioned divinity has authenticated her mission and work. Nothing can overthrow this testimony which rests upon the sure laws of evidence. From the Church, thus depending upon her almighty Founder, we have received the Sacred Scriptures. Her voice is infallible either in the proposing of doctrine or in the authentication of the written oracles of God ; infallible in all she declares, since the Holy Ghost speaks in her. This is the apostolic rule : “ We are of God : he that is of God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth us not ; by this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” \* Safely guarded by this rule, we are prepared to receive and improve the treasures of grace which are to be found in the words of inspiration. Thus “all Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to

\* 1 St. John iv. 6.

correct, to instruct in justice." Thus "the holy Scriptures can instruct us to salvation by the faith which is in Christ Jesus." \* Illumined by the light of a certain faith, taught by the interior operations of the Holy Ghost, we are able to know something of the mind of the Spirit, and to discern the meaning of words which otherwise might be to us as an unlettered scroll. So different is the devout study of the inspired volume by a faithful Catholic, from the Protestant interpretations of private judgment, that there is scarcely place for comparison. One seeks the aid of the Scriptures to establish preconceived opinions, or to fortify grounds of doctrinal controversy which are identified with individual pride. With rare exceptions can be found the humility and distrust of self, which are so necessary in the presence of God and in the hearing of His voice. And in probably no case can one educated under the influences of Protestantism approach the inspired volume with a free mind and a willing heart. No one ever learned his faith from the Bible alone. Every reader is either the possessor of a faith imbibed from the lessons of childhood, or the victim of prejudices acquired by education. Experience has demonstrated that there is no absolutely impartial mind, and that the unspeaking page

\* 2 Timothy iii. 15, 16.



of Scripture is made to answer to the will of the reader. There is rarely to be found the complete submission of the intellect before the words of the Holy Ghost.

The Catholic, on the contrary, does not come to the study of the inspired volume in doubt concerning his creed. The same authority which gives him his creed proposes to him the written word inspired by God. In the unfailing light of his faith he sees the wonders and beauties of the whole field of inspiration. The more he reads, the more is his faith strengthened, and the riches of revealed truth come forth more brightly from day to day. All is in harmony. The voice of the Church without, the language of the Evangelists and prophets, and the promptings of the Spirit within him. Without contradiction, without the possibility of error, he looks to God in revelation and redemption, and grows in the knowledge and love of his Lord and Saviour. On every side light increases until the divine truth fills his mind, and the world of faith becomes more real to him than that of sense.

Who, amid the distracting and conflicting errors of our time, does not desire this blessing of a certain faith, this sure knowledge of God and His revelation? Protestantism has been thoroughly tried and found wanting. It has no creed. It gives to no one any

truthful answer to the great needs of the soul. From it have come, by the deductions of logic and the experience of facts, infidelity broad and deep, the denial of everything sacred, the loss of Christ and His Gospel. In all its changing forms, with all its professions, it is ever the same denier of positive religion, which depends absolutely upon an immutable creed. How can the earnest and sincere be the willing victims of delusion, striving in vain to make a religion for themselves, and thus attempting to intrude into the province of the Almighty? Behold the ark of God. Its open door invites the entrance of all who would escape the eternal doom, when the storm shall arise in its fury, and the floods lift up their waves. It shall be borne upon the face of the angry deluge; it shall rest upon the everlasting mountains, where the Uncreated Light shall dawn upon a new heaven and a new earth, and the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, shall reveal the perfections of the adorable Trinity.

Then shall “we no longer see through a glass in a dark manner, but face to face.” \*

The inspired language of St. Paul may well be applied to many in our day whose eyes are blinded that they see not the truth. The veil is upon their senses and upon their hearts: “For, until this present

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

day, the self-same veil, in the reading of the Scriptures, remaineth not taken away ; because in Christ it is made void. But when they shall be converted to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is a Spirit ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory.” \*

\* 2 Cor. iii. 14-18.







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